

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

**CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY**

---

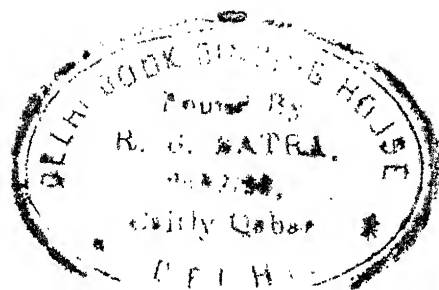
CALL No.

572.05

M.I.

Vol. 24

D.G.A. 79.







*New*  
**MAN IN INDIA**

A Quarterly  
Science with

of Anthropological  
India

*BR HL*

Founded by S A R

ROY

---

FOLK SONGS OF CHHATTISGARH

BELIEFS CONCERNING HUMAN SACRIFICE AMONG THE  
HILL REDDIS

*By Christoph von Färber-Haimendorf*

THE REPRODUCTIVE LIFE OF MALER WOMEN

*By S. S. Sarkar*

MATRIARCHY IN KERALA

*By L. A. Krishna Iyer*

NOTES ON A KONDH TOUR

*By Verrier Elwin*

REVIEW

*By D. N. Majumdar*

NOTES AND QUERIES

---

Annual Subscription

Rs. 15 (India) or £ 1.10.0 (Foreign)



*511310*  
*7*

# MAN IN INDIA

*Edited by*

10.5.1911  
MAN IN INDIA

*A Quarterly Record of Anthropological  
Science with Special Reference to India*

*Founded by SARAT CHANDRA ROY*

---

FESTIVAL SONGS

NAG-PANCHAMI

*By Mary Fuller*

DIWALI PAINTING

*By W. G. Archer*

A HONEY FESTIVAL

*By Verrier Elwin*

A PIG FESTIVAL IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

*By Durga Bhagwat*

THE LARU KAJ

*By Shamrao Hivale*

THE USE OF MYTHS IN THE FESTAL PRACTICE OF THE  
MUNDAS OF CHOTA NAGPUR

*By B. N. Bhadani*

PRIMITIVE ABORIGINAL CULTURES IN THE DECCAN

*By Christoph von Furer-Harmendorf*

NOTES AND QUERIES

---

*Annual Subscription*

Rs. 15 (India) or £1-10-0 (Foreign)

573.05



6612  
39.3.15  
MAN IN INDIA

*A Quarterly Record of Anthropological  
Science with Special Reference to India*

Founded by SARAT CHANDR. D. V.

---

# MAN IN INDIA

*Edited by*

RAMESH CHANDRA ROY

W. G. ARCHER

VERRIER ELWIN

MAN IN INDIA was founded in 1921 by Sarat Chandra

a journal with courage  
years. After his death,  
I to continue the journal  
dian ethnography and to

Recd 12/6/43  
B21 ✓



# MAN IN INDIA

*A Quarterly Record of Anthropological  
Science with Special Reference to India*

Founded by **SARAT CHANDRA ROY**

---

## FOLK-TALE NUMBER

MALTO FOLK-TALES

THE FOLK-TALE IN SANTAL SOCIETY

*By Mildred Archer*

THE LEGEND OF RASALU KUAR

*By Verrier Elwin*

FOLK-LORE OF THE KOLS

*By Walter G. Griffiths*

NOTES AND QUERIES

REVIEWS

573.05

---

*Annual Subscription*

Rs. 15 (India) or £1-10-0 (Foreign)

FOUR RUPEES

Vol. XXIV

DECEMBER 1944

No. 4



# MAN IN INDIA

*Edited by*

RAMESH CHANDRA ROY

# MAN IN INDIA

Vol. XXIV 1

March 1944

[ No. 1

## COMMENT

At the end of 1943 the Royal Anthropological Institute celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Ethnological Society and *Man in India* offers its felicitations to the great Society which has stimulated and directed research in every part of the world. During the celebrations in London, Raymond Firth gave a speech on 'The Future of Social Anthropology' which is so relevant to the ethnographic situation in India that we reproduce part of it in place of the usual Comment.

'In theory social anthropology ranges over all human societies. In practice it has tended to restrict itself to those societies or parts of society which could be examined as small units, by direct observation, or 'field work.' Anthropologists used to be interested mainly in primitive people, the so-called savages. But during the period of its history as a science, roughly for the last hundred years, there has been world wide expansion of trade, of political interests, of missionary and philanthropic effort. Primitive tribes have lost much of their isolation and many of their ancient customs. The bicycle and the sewing machine have reached the heart of Africa; the Solomon Islands and New Guinea are torn by the shells and bombs of civilized warfare. The modern savage is as likely to be found in the Gestapo as in the jungle. Anthropologists have begun to re-orient their study in like measure. They are now more interested in how cultures change, how people adapt themselves to new tools, to new economic situations such as the chance of working for wages, to new education, and new political and religious ideas.

572.05

33439

M. I.

The tide is still on the flow. After the war we can expect a speeding up of communications ; a drive for better nutrition, health, and living conditions ; an increased rate of growth in desires for self-government. These and many other movements will give anthropology still more complex problems of change to study. The old domain of the primitive will shrink still more.

I would like to try to clear up a common misunderstanding here. It is sometimes said that anthropologists want to keep primitive peoples as they are—as a private museum or laboratory for study ; for æsthetic reasons, because we like them ‘ unspoiled ’ ; or, more subtly, because we want exploitation of them to continue. Now we do not object to studying isolated tribes on the fringe of civilization ; they show us forms of institutions not found elsewhere. We often like what we find there ; most of us have the pleasantest memories of our friendly relations with the people and have admired the spectacular and the beautiful in their ceremonies. But problems just as interesting, and people just as pleasant and often more stimulating, are to be found in the changing cultures in modern Africa, the Pacific or the Far East. We do not want to keep the people primitive ; we know (perhaps better than most) that it cannot be done. But what we do stress is that people do not live by money alone ; that development, even if it means higher wages, better food, and more education, may not be enough. People need a system of common values to give meaning to their lives ; community institutions which they respect, which they can follow, and above all which they themselves can run efficiently. Too often in the past ‘ development ’ has meant break-up, not build-up. The anthropologist is interested scientifically in the breaking up because it helps him to see how the society works, where the strain come, what yields first. But just as he is interested in the primitive, because it shows him one

kind of society in comparatively stable equilibrium, so also he is interested in the African or the Pacific islander of the future, who, he hopes, will form part of another wider kind of society, with another kind of stable equilibrium. To put it summarily;—scientifically, the state of a society is indifferent to us; there are problems to be studied at all levels. From the personal point of view we prefer integrated to disintegrating societies, believing in the value of co-operation and common ideals and institutions on as wide a basis as possible.

But this question of building up new forms of society has wider implications. After the war we are expecting changes of great magnitude in the countries with old civilizations, whether mainly rural or mainly industrial. In Europe, China, and Japan, for instance, quite apart from what may happen to political frontiers, some basic social and economic readjustments will probably take place. Some will be concerned with achieving greater social equality; ultimately, we hope, with the aim of setting relationships between members of a group on a firmer foundation. Others will attempt to promote more stable relationships between groups. Still others will try to give a more definite meaning to social life itself. Already 'social security,' 'the reform of education,' 'international co-operation,' the colonial theory of 'partnership,' the 'recall to religion' have become labels for sets of ideas of this kind. Whatever will be done along these lines, they are phases of a great attempt to build up new social entities which shall be more stable than the old, by creating new, wider, and more complex relationships.

Here there would seem to be work for the social anthropologist. He can study these efforts at change, see their effects on the life of the people, and estimate how these new developments are likely to operate. We may expect to find him sooner or later studying the effects of industrialization on a rural community

in the Balkans ; what happens in an English village if a new agricultural policy is put into operation ; the relation between religious belief and social structure in an English cathedral town ; or the effects of mass education and a new land system on indebtedness among Chinese farmers. The official recognition of organized religion once again in Russia will offer him a fascinating example of a fundamental problem—how far religion is a stabilizing factor in a national group life, and what degree of integration it has with other kinds of values and ritual behaviour.

For anthropology to participate in this scientific field for the future, I think some points stand out. Social anthropology obviously cannot do the job alone ; collaboration with other social sciences is necessary, and will have to be worked out more thoroughly than it has been till now. Anthropology will also have to organize the international contacts in its own sphere more widely, and more systematically. We shall hope to see expert anthropologists coming forward from a great range of countries—Chinese, Africans, Americans, Europeans (not forgetting Russians from outside Europe too), Indians, and Indonesians will be needed, not only to study the problems of their own communities but also to give that useful comparative outsider's analysis of each other's problems. Often, it is to be hoped, they will co-operate in teams on the actual field work, or as bodies of advisers on defining a problem and the best methods of tackling it. This of course demands more training facilities and more research centres, especially outside Europe and America. It also demands more funds.

Greater precision in methods will also be needed ; more planned research, more co-operative research, and more quantitative research. By planned research I mean here especially the study from the outset of problems rather than of peoples as such. This is not to say that one should not go out to fill in blanks in

an ethnographic map. But on the whole it should be more specifically a type or a variety of social structure, of economy, of political organization, or of inter-relationship between them, which should primarily determine the place and time of study. And the study should aim at being one of a series of related investigations. By co-operative research is meant not only team work. Work done by the anthropologist should fit more closely that done on the borderlines of the same problem by other social scientists, and by agriculturalists, biologists, or medical men according to circumstances. Quantitative research needs emphasis in order that the generalizations of the anthropologist may be backed up more systematically than is at present usually the case, by that evidence of numbers which gives the range and the frequency of the facts observed. Much of the anthropologist's work has lain hitherto in what may be called micro-sociology—the study of small groups or of small units in larger groups; of how relationships operate on a small scale, in personal terms. The approach of the professed sociologist, who usually handles his material on a larger scale, may be termed macro-sociology by contrast. I think that the most valuable contribution of the social anthropologist may well still lie in this micro-sociological field. His experience has given him perhaps more than other social scientists the knowledge of how small units work, and he can provide material for testing on this observational level the wider sociological generalizations'.—Reprinted from *Man*, Vol. XLIV (Jan.-Feb. 1944), pp. 20 f.

# FOLK-SONGS OF CHHATTISGARH<sup>1</sup>

## I

You have to grind  
The rough gram twice  
Love is a hard thing  
You cannot forget it  
When you sleep on a bed  
The bed-bugs bite you  
When you sleep on the floor  
Your body aches  
Love is a hard thing  
Your arms and legs are very lovely  
Love is a hard thing.

## II

Your eyes are fireflies  
Your hair, my love, is curly  
O love, how beautiful you are  
The bread in the pan is burnt  
My eater of supper is dying of hunger  
Your eyes are fireflies  
My beautiful love.

## III

Clouds in the east  
And to the south the rain  
Your growing youth, my love  
Rains fire.

## IV

My golden love  
Like a cloud full of thunder  
Is your fresh youth  
Like the lightning  
Shines your face  
Drop by drop  
Your pitcher has been filled  
And your youth is ruined  
My golden love.

## V

In the great garden  
The shade is cool  
Who will lie with me there  
Adorable bird ?

---

<sup>1</sup> These songs, which are translated from the Chhattisgarhi dialect, were recorded in the Raipur and Bilaspur Districts of the Central Provinces.

## VI

I went to the garden  
To find my desire  
I reached  
The mango grove  
I wandered  
Among the tall bamboos  
My mind was sad  
Among the tall bamboos  
To find my desire  
I went to the garden.

## VII

You shook the mango branch  
You pulled it down and broke it off  
You have made me weep for love  
You cut a rope, you tied it to the branch  
You pulled it down and shook it to and fro  
A slender youth of Chiknimuhi village  
Is flirting with me in my house  
Come let us go to the forest.

## VIII

The moon rises  
Stealing the sun's light  
Between her thighs  
The man steals the nectar  
Between her thighs.

## IX

The moon comes up  
Crowded by many stars  
If you do not desire me  
Do as you will  
But for love  
I will not go far away  
For love of you.

## X

The golden casket has a silver lid  
Come soon go soon  
But on your way  
Give me at least a dream.

## XI

Red as a rose  
Come to your madman's bed  
Come as a bird  
Come to your madman's bed.



## XII

The legs are of saja  
The frame is of sarai  
O girl with tinkling bells  
I will make music  
On your bed tonight.

## XIII

How dark my bed is now  
Like the moon was your body  
Like an antelope your eyes  
Long was your hair, my diamond  
You loved me for two days  
And went away to your own land  
How dark my bed is now  
The koel cries on the mango branch  
In the forest calls the peacock  
On the river bank the crane  
And I mistake their music  
For the voice of my love  
How dark my bed is now.

## XIV

Bells bells bells silver bells  
After endless days  
I have found you  
Now I will not let you go  
For endless days.

## XV

You said ' In the stream '  
But you went to bathe  
In the pond  
You lying Gondin  
You have deceived me  
Again.

## XVI

The river-bed is dry  
Flower-girl go and bring me water  
The lake is dry  
For there is no lotus there  
The fairest girl is dry  
Who has no lover  
Flower-girl go and bring me water.

## XVII

You have broken  
The golden pitcher  
Where did you lose  
Your body's youth ?

## XVIII

The lemons are ripe  
Bring a pole to bring them down  
But the lemons may rot  
Before I give them to you.

## XIX

I saw you in a dream  
In colour lustrous as a bumble-bee  
You were at work on your dark hair  
Making the parting with your comb  
Black bangles on your arms  
I opened both my eyes and looked around  
How lonely was my bed.

## XX

When the dog barked in the village  
I had a dream  
But when I woke  
There was nothing.

## XXI

The bee buzzes in the garden  
It flies round and round and settles on my head  
It sips the juice and buzzes as it goes  
The bee flies round and settles on my breast  
It sips the juice and buzzes as it goes  
It flies round and round and sits between my thighs  
It sips the juice and buzzes as it goes  
To the eyes the bee is ugly, but its words are sweet  
If I could meet that bee I would clasp it to my heart  
I would keep it in my thighs and give it all my honey  
The bee buzzes in the garden.

## XXII

You are lovely  
In colour as the oil-seed  
Like a red bead  
Is your body  
With no dog barking  
The village seems deserted  
Without its buffaloes  
The shed stands empty  
Without my man  
My bed is lonely  
And my womb is barren  
Your body  
Is lovely as the oil-seed  
Your body.

## XXIII

Chhur chhur cat ! Dur dur dog ! Who is that at the door ?

Bhauji, it is not a dog or cat, it is your little dewar who would delight your mind

Little brother, you have done well to come ; sleep there on your brother's bed

But, bhauji, on my brother's bed I'll get no sleep, I'll be awake all night

Bhauji, it would be better if I slept on your bed, then sleep will come swaying swaying

Brother, there's a black she-cobra in my bed ; it will bite you and take away your life

Bhauji, if my life departs it will be good, for then I will be able to fulfil my desire.

## XXIV

Black clouds thunder in the sky

From the ant-hill the cobra calls

The ten fingers drum above the breasts

The tiger roars in the cave.

## XXV

My dark love is walking slowly

Come, wild berry, bare your arms

Show your feet adorned with anklets

Give me your hand

With its nine hundred rings

Open to me your breast

Your love, your body

Open your dark body.

## XXVI

Boy, the birds chatter when the dawn comes

Who is sleeping in the coloured palace ?

Who has enjoyed a night of sin ?

The girl is sleeping in the coloured palace

The boy has enjoyed a night of sin

But the birds chatter when the dawn comes

How did you climb into the coloured palace ?

How did you climb into her bed ?

With a rope I climbed into the coloured palace

By the firelight I climbed into her bed.

VERRIER ELWIN

# BELIEFS CONCERNING HUMAN SACRIFICE AMONG THE HILL REDDIS

BY CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

IN India isolated cases of human sacrifice occur still in backward rural areas<sup>1</sup>, but as an institution the ritual killing of humans is a thing of the past. After the suppression of the Kondhs' notorious Meriah sacrifices in the second half of the 19th century, there remained no part of Peninsular India where humans were publicly sacrificed, and what was once a recognized religious practice among certain communities became a criminal act. It is only in the unadministered hill-tracts between Assam and Burma that, despite determined efforts at its suppression, human sacrifice lingers as an institution, and it was there that in 1936 I met prospective but luckily rescued victims as well as boastful and entirely unrepentant perpetrators of this ancient rite<sup>2</sup>.

During recent field-work among the Hill Reddis and Koyas inhabiting the hills which flank the Godavari gorges I found, however, many indications that here too ritual murders had occurred in recent years and that the belief in the practice of human sacrifice has still a powerful hold on the minds of many aboriginals.

The Hill Reddis are a small tribe of primitive agriculturists and the basis of their economy is shifting-cultivation on hill-slopes and the gathering of wild forest produce. Politically divided between Hyderabad State and the East Godavari District of Madras Presidency, they lead an inconspicuous existence in roadless, wooded hills and have hitherto attracted so little attention that they were not even listed in the Census Reports of 1931<sup>3</sup>.

Though there is a documented instance of human sacrifice probably performed and certainly attended by Reddis during a local rebellion in 1897, I did not expect to find any memory of the practice among the Reddis of the present generations, and at first I was inclined to treat with some scepticism the rumours of ritual murders current both among the aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations of the Reddi country.

Many of these rumours centre in a particular festival which used to be celebrated once a year on Papi Konda, a hill some 2,000 feet above sea-level, overlooking the Godavari gorges. The crown of this hill is covered with high grass thinly interspersed with gnarled teak and approximately in the middle are five stones,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 402, 403, 408, 409, 411.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Naked Nagas*, (London, 1939).

<sup>3</sup> The results of my field-work among the Hill Reddis in 1940 and 1941 will shortly be published in a monograph entitled *The Reddis of the Bison Hills* (*The Aboriginal Tribes of Hyderabad*, Vol. II).

one upright, standing some two and a half feet high, and the other four lying on the ground, but in such a position as to suggest that once they had all stood in a row. The upright stone is believed to represent Vana Devudu (Rain God), sometimes also described as Gali Devudu (Wind God), while the flat stones are said to represent Bhimana, Arjuna, Nakula, and Saha Deva.

Although these stones are known as the Panduvulus, the real identity of the five Pandava brothers as the heroes of the Mahabharata is unknown to the Reddis, who refer to them as Panduvulu Devata, and do not consider them in any way different from other deities. There is, however, no complete agreement in the Reddi country as to the names of all the Panduvulu Devata; Bhimana, Arjuna and Vana Devudu are generally mentioned, but instead of Nakula and Saha Deva, which were the names given to the stones by Pogal Ramaya the *pujari* of Kutturvada, I have heard included the goddesses Sarlamma and Guntamma.

The festival that interests us in this context, however, is invariably connected with Vana Devudu or Gali Devudu and consequently known as the Vana Devudu Panduga or Gali Devu Panduga. E. Thurston gives, in his note on the Konda Reddis, a short reference to this festival: 'The shrine of Sarlamma of Peddakonda, eight miles east of Rekapalle, is a place of pilgrimage, and so is Bison Hill (Papikonda) where an important Reddi festival is held every seven or eight years in honour of the Pandava brothers and a huge fat pig, fattened for the occasion, is killed and eaten <sup>1</sup>.'

When I enquired in Parantapalli about the festival on Papi Konda, the local Reddis were extremely reluctant to speak of it, and most of them asserted that they had never attended such a feast. Considering how close Parantapalli is to Papi Konda this denial appeared rather strange, but at the time I attached to it no particular significance. Later I realized that it must have been entirely untrue, for even Reddis in far-away villages told me how in their youth they had participated in the Vana Devudu Panduga, and all alleged that even now the people of Parantapalli and Kutturvadda celebrate the feast every year.

When I visited Kutturvadda, Pogal Ramaya, a young man who a few years ago had succeeded his father as *pujari*, told me that in his grandfather's time, a great feast called Gali Devudu or Vana Devudu Panduga was annually celebrated on the Papi Konda during the mango-season. Many people assembled and a pig and twenty chickens were sacrificed, a whole bag of rice was used for the feast, and his own grandfather acted as *pujari*. Ramaya stated emphatically, however, that for a long time this festival has not been held on Papi Konda, and that nowadays the people

<sup>1</sup> *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras 1909), Vol. III, p. 355.

of Kutturvadda performed the *puja* for Vana Devudu in their houses.

That a Vana Devudu Panduga or Rain God Festival celebrated during the dry weather was intended to secure rain for the coming cultivating season appeared evident, but Ramaya himself did not mention this aspect, and in the absence of further information it would have been unjustified to regard such a feast as actual rain-making magic. Subsequently I was told, by a *veju*<sup>1</sup> of Kakish-nur, that Ramaya of Kutturvadda 'has a very powerful god, Vana Devudu. If it does not rain, he kills a chicken and makes a *puja*, and then it will rain; in the same way he can stop the rain. But no other Reddi can do that, and we never go to Kutturvadda to ask Ramaya to bring rain.' Even in villages as far distant as Gogulapudi, the rain-making powers of the Pogal men of Kutturvadda are known, and it is always emphasized that no other *pujari* or *veju* understands how to propitiate Vana Devudu or induce him to send rain.

Unsatisfactory as Ramaya's information on the Vana Devudu Panduga was, it led me to discuss the situation with a sadhu who has lived among the Reddis for more than twenty years. To him I owe the first fuller account of the feast, which he had watched when his hermitage was situated near Kutturvadda. He corroborated Ramaya's statement that it was no longer held on the top of Papi Kondai but disproved the assertion that now only a domestic ceremony was performed in its stead. The well-known site on the summit had been exchanged for a place near a spring, narrowed in by rocks and hidden in the depth of the jungle. The sadhu's account runs as follows:

'It was at the end of the cold season when the feast was celebrated at the source of a brook, about one and a half miles from Kutturvadda in the direction of Papi Konda. My hut stood close to this brook, and so I watched the ceremony from the beginning to the end. Reddis from several neighbouring villages assembled, for the most part the important men of their communities, but also two women. There were chickens, grain, turmeric and great quantities of palm-wine. Soon after the people arrived, they began preparing food and grinding turmeric with which to smear their faces. Then the *pujari* of the various villages went to a secret place, unknown even to me, where two brass plates are kept. Judging from the time that passed till they returned, I would say that the distance cannot be further than two furlongs. They returned in solemn procession, walking in single file, with serious expressions on their faces, their hair wild and their bodies almost naked. Two men carried the plates and two old bamboo batons very reverently in their hands.

<sup>1</sup> Seer or magician capable of trance-experiences.

'Beside a rock a circular place had been cleared of grass and there the two brass plates were put down. Then the chickens were brought to the *pujari*, who cut their throats and let the blood flow into the plates. They then sat down in front of the plates and began to read the omens, which were to be seen in the blood and to discuss what they portended. These omens concerned the welfare of the whole community, and the prospects for the crops.

'Then the *pujari* and the old men got up and embraced each other with great solemnity and apparent emotion, two and two clasping each other for a few moments chest to chest. Then they sat down quietly for a while, as if exhausted, and finally went down to the spring to drink some water.

'In the meantime the food was being prepared : the fire for the cooking had been produced by rubbing two bamboos. When the food was ready, leaves were spread on the ground. Now the *pujari* beat the brass plates like gongs and then took them back to their hiding place. By the time they returned all the others had begun eating and they now joined them in their meal. So much palm-wine was drunk that at the end the men were quite intoxicated.'

Armed with this information I approached Pogal Ramaya once more, and now he admitted, though reluctantly, that the rite for Vana Devudu, for which he gave me the alternative name Meriem Panduga, was actually performed in the jungle at a place called Tōm. He confirmed the existence and use of the two brass plates, and even told me that these were kept in a nearby cave. At the feast the blood of chickens and pigs was dropped on these plates, and in the blood, one could see as in a mirror the semblance of tigers, snakes, scorpions and clouds, all omens of future events. All my attempts to see the cave and the sacred plates were of no avail. At one time I thought I had persuaded Ramaya to lead me to the place but after hours of wandering in the jungle we arrived at a stone sacred to a minor god, and it was clear that Ramaya never intended to take me to the scene of the festival.

The great reticence of the Reddis on the subject of this particular feast continued to puzzle me, for otherwise they talked more freely about rites and ceremonies than of social and economic matters. What was there to hide about this feast ?

While I camped in Kakishnur I heard vague rumours about *patudu donga* or kidnappers, who were supposed to capture men and kill them in the jungle. Just two months before my arrival there had been a scare in Kakishnur, but there were no casualties and no one had seen any of these mysterious *patudu donga*. The first serious intimation that perhaps more lay behind these non-

descript rumours than met the eye was certain details of two cases of homicide, which had occurred in Kakishnur in recent years. Both cases will shortly be discussed in full, but this much may be said in anticipation, that the blood of the victims was apparently destined for ritual purposes.

As to the ritual use of human blood little could be elicited from the rather suspicious Reddis of Kakishnur, but in Tumileru, the village on the opposite bank of the Godavari, I found an opportunity of broaching the subject. Here I was told that during the Konda Razu Panduga the blood of a pig is mixed with grain and thrown into the forest. I asked casually whether in the old times human blood may sometimes have been used in the same way. The answer was instantaneous: 'Of course, in the old times human beings were sacrificed, but now, with policemen and forest guards going backwards and forwards, how could we do such a thing?'

The men to whom I was speaking added that in the interior of the hills, the custom might still survive and that in their fathers' time such sacrifices had been offered to the gods of Kutturvadda; even now there persisted a fear of *patudu donga* at the time when the crops were ripening and in Tumileru there were still people alive who had once been attacked by such kidnappers but they had beaten them back with their bows and arrows.

Here perhaps was the key to the Reddis' strange reaction to all questions about the festival on Papi Konda. Yet direct inquiries in Kakishnur might, I felt, wreck my whole work there, and so I curbed my curiosity and waited for a better opportunity. This came in Errametta, a small village on the very edge of the Reddi country, where I found an old man, Anandel Venkatreddi, who had attended the Vana Devudu Panduga and was quite prepared to tell me about the experience.

'When I was young,' said Venkatreddi, 'we all went to Papi Konda; even Reddis from far off villages came and there were often one or two thousand<sup>1</sup> people present, but no women, only men and half-grown boys. The Pogal people were the *pujari* of the feast; Pogal Saraya the father of Ramaya, was the main *pujari*, and Pogal Chinamreddi, the father of Venkaya of Parantapalli, and another Pogal man used to help him. Some weeks before the feast the Pogal men went through the country and collected five or six rupees towards the expenses of the feast from every village. They provided all the food; we did not take any with us nor did we bring any animals for sacrifice.

'When we arrived on Papi Konda on the day of the feast, we stayed on the top near the five stones, and the Pongal men warned

<sup>1</sup> Allowance must be made for the Reddis' vague idea about numbers; it is doubtful whether Venkatreddi was able to guess the size of a crowd.



us not to wander about in the forest, for a *konda devata* (hill deity) was abroad in the shape of a tiger, and might devour those who strayed from the crowd. So we all stayed together. They said that only they were safe, for they were possessed by gods, and they told us too that the *konda devata* had taken the form of a tiger so that she could drink the blood that runs from the sacrificial place.

'While we all waited on the top of the mountain and drank palm-wine, the Pogat men went to a cave down in the jungle where they keep two brass plates. It was in this cave that they killed the victims for the sacrifice and prepared some rice; but we did not see what animals were killed. After a long time the three Pogat men came back carrying the two brass plates, one filled with blood and the other with a mixture of rice and blood. What kind of blood it was we did not know, but the rice was later scattered in the forest.'

Here I ventured to interrupt him with the question, whether he thought it likely that it was human blood.

'It may have been the blood of a man,' he said without the slightest sign of surprise, 'but who can tell? We never saw the victims killed, and the Pogat men did not allow anybody near their cave. When they had brought the plates to the five stones, they read the future in the blood. There was plenty to eat and so much palm-wine that we got quite drunk, and we danced with drums till the next morning. Then we went home.'

Such was Venkatreddi's story; but was he quite frank, when he said that he was ignorant as to the nature of the sacrificial blood? He could hardly be expected to admit that he had been conscious of the sacrifice of human victims, even though perhaps thirty years had passed since he had last attended the festival. But that he was neither shocked nor surprised at my suggestion is in itself significant. If my suggestion was to the point, he may have thought me better informed than I was, and therefore answered in a non-committal way. He added then that nowadays the festival is no longer held near the five stones, but in the forest at some distance. Questioned as to the rumours of *patudu donga*, he confirmed the fear of kidnappers in search of human victims, but said that he had never heard of anybody who had actually fallen into their hands.

The belief in *patudu donga* prevails not only in the Godavari Region, but persists also in the Rampa Country. During my tour through that area in June 1941 the Rev. Paul Son, a missionary stationed at Chodavaram, mentioned to me in conversation that two months ago all the Reddis and Koyas of Chodavaram village had been scared of kidnappers, in spite of their proximity to a Police Station and the Tahsil headquarters. Subsequently I discussed these rumours with the headman of the village, Sankuru Bapana,

who evinced much less reluctance to speak about them than the Reddis of Hyderabad. He told me of the belief that on a mountain near Teddepalle, a big village about 12 miles north of Chodavaram, where lived a Reddi *muttadar*<sup>1</sup> of Kutru clan, human victims were still offered to Maveli Devata. No animals were acceptable to this goddess, and if she did not receive a human victim once in three years, she would come to the village and spread disease among the inhabitants. Another centre of her cult lies, according to this headman, near the village of Dabbavalasa in the Vermulu Konda Mutta, where the victims were killed in the jungle. He thought that even nowadays the people must be able to provide victims, for otherwise Maveli Devata would kill at least three or four persons in each village, and when I asked whether the *patudu donga* were Reddis or Koyas, he stated unhesitatingly, although a Reddi himself, that they were Reddis.

The headman and some old men of the Reddi settlement of Rampa confirmed this information in every point and added several new details. They told me spontaneously that the goddess propitiated with human sacrifices was called Madiviti Maveli, and that her sanctuary lay one mile north of Taddepalle. The feast in honour of Madiviti Maveli was celebrated in April; and since she accepted none but human victims, all the neighbouring villages were filled with fear at that time. This year the rumours of *patudu donga* had been so numerous and persistent even in Rampa, that one dark night they had caught and beaten one of their own fellow-villagers who had been unlucky enough to be mistaken for a *patudu donga*. They told me too that the head of a victim sacrificed for Madiviti Maveli had to be severed from the body by a single stroke; then a cloth was soaked with the blood, so that in years to come, when it was impossible to provide a new victim, the cloth with the human blood could be placed before the goddess.<sup>2</sup> Finally my informants mentioned a rumour according to which people from Jari in Malkanagiri Taluq came across the Sileru River in search of human victims in years when they had had a particularly good harvest. In consequence no Reddi would dare to travel alone through the hills between the Pamuleru and Sileru Rivers.

The strong belief in Maveli Devata as a deity demanding human victims that is prevalent in the Rampa Country throws light on a tradition, of which I heard at Kasaram, a village in Hyderabad situated between Koinda and Katkur. Near this village is a piece of flat land called Raulugummu, now overgrown with jungle but evidently very suitable for cultivation. The story goes that anybody cultivating this field would, unless he propitiated Maveli

<sup>1</sup> Hereditary chieftain.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the alleged soaking of a cloth with blood after the murder of Buzar Zogreddi at Kakishnur.

Devata who resides in a stone on a nearby hill with a human sacrifice be himself devoured by the goddess. It is for this reason the local, Koyas and Reddis say, that the land now lies fallow <sup>1</sup>.

With the knowledge that the Reddis themselves, not only in the Godavari Region, but even in the far more 'civilized' Rampa Country, believe in the persistence of and even the necessity for human sacrifice in certain localities, we may now turn to those concrete cases of the alleged ritual use of human blood which have occurred in recent years. All these cases were the object of police investigation, but here we are not concerned with their criminal but merely their ritual and psychological aspects.

The most recent of the cases of homicide that interest us in this context occurred in Kakishnur about a year and a half before my stay in that village. When I compiled the house-list of Kakishnur, I came across the house of a young widow living alone with two small children. This was somewhat unusual, for as a rule young widows either marry again or return to their home-village, and when I remarked upon this, it was whispered that her husband, Kechel Rajaya, had been killed the year before. The men responsible for the deed, three brothers of Suntre clan, had fled the village and were now living in Kondamodalu on the British side of the Godavari.

The motive for the murder appeared obscure, though there were indications that Kechel Rajaya and the Suntre brothers worked for rival timber-merchants and that an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Suntre men's employer to draw all Reddis of Kakishnur to his side had preceded the murder. The only eye-witness was a young man called Ventla Kanaya, and it was from that I heard the following story:—

'One day during the bamboo cutting season, Suntre Ramaya and his two brothers suggested that Kechel Rajaya and I should go with them to cut bamboos, and so we went all together along the path towards Pantapalli, till we came to a place called Bilimakal Bandam. Here the three Suntre men suddenly fell upon us and beat us with bamboos. I defended myself as well as I could, but Suntre Ramaya hit Rajaya with a heavy bamboo over the head, so that he fell to the ground. The next moment I managed to escape and ran back to the village. I was so frightened that at first I did not dare to tell anybody what had happened.

'Afterwards I heard that the three Suntre men had made a *puja* and cooked some food for a *konda devata*, the day before

<sup>1</sup> In an article *Man Eaters and Were-tigers*, *Man*, Vol. XXXI (1931), No. 212. L. A. Cammiade refers to the practice of human sacrifice among 'a jungle tribe near the banks of the lower Godavari,' but does not specify whether the incident he describes occurred among Koyas or Konda Reddis.

they killed Rajaya. Had I known that, I would never have gone with them to the jungle. They only made that *pūja* because they meant to kill us.

‘When after two days people in the village began to worry over Kechel Rajaya’s absence, I told what I knew, and we all went to the forest and found the body on the place where I had seen him fall. Then Suntre Ramaya boasted in front of all the villagers, that he had killed Rajaya, and that he had mixed Rajaya’s blood with grain and thrown the grain on the bamboos he had cut and on his field. But later, when some policemen came to Kakishnur, the Suntre men ran away to Kondamodalū and later sent for their families.’

So far Ventla Kanaya’s story, the veracity of which is not seriously contested by anybody in Kakishnur, but most Reddis do not care to talk about the incident, and many pretend that just in those days they had been ‘on a visit to relations in a neighbouring village.’<sup>1</sup> All agreed, however, that the Suntre brothers had emigrated to Kondamodalū, and a few months later I found them there living in three houses a furlong or so from the main village. The Reddi headman of Kondamodalū told me that he knew all about the murder of Kechel Rajaya, but neither he nor any other villager seemed to mind the Suntre brother’s presence.

Another case of homicide had occurred in Kakishnur several years before, and in this too the same three Suntre men were involved. The victim was the late *patel* Buzar Zogreddi, a member of the family in which both the dignity of *pūjari* and headman are hereditary. He seems to have been a strong personality with considerable influence in the village. His widow, a very old, but still lively lady, told me the circumstances of her husband’s death :

‘Several years ago my husband went to bathe in the Godavari with our eldest son, who has since died. On the way back Suntre Ramaya, Sintal Rajaya, Suntre Kanaya and Suntre Lachmaya ambushed them, and threw big stones at my husband. My son came running home and told me what had happened, so I rushed to the spot. We found that the four men had dragged my husband to the Godavari’s edge and were collecting wood to burn the body. I saw that my husband’s head was broken and the brain was coming out. Then I cried : “Why did you kill my husband ? What has he done to you ?” But they replied that they had not killed him but found him like that on the path. But if that had been true, why didn’t they bring him to the village, so that we

---

<sup>1</sup> A Hindu merchant woman, for whom the murdered man had worked, confirmed Ventla Kanaya’s story and added that she was among the people who had gone to the forest to find the body and that she had noticed mutilations evidently made by a knife.

could arrange a proper funeral? I called all the villagers and they saw the body, and watched it till the police came. At that time we did not know that the murderers had drenched a cloth in my husband's blood and buried it in the ground. But later it came out, for when the police arrived the Suntre men unearthed the cloth and threw it into the Godavari.'

The circumstances of Zogreddi's death are common knowledge among the Reddis. But to test their reaction I once asked a large group of Kakishnur men, who were gossiping over the cooking of food for a wedding, about the fate of Zogreddi's murderers.

Hypocritically they answered, that not tolerating them any longer in their village, they had driven them out and that the Suntre brothers were now living in Kondamodalu; but they failed to mention that this had happened, not after Zogreddi's death, but several years later, after the murder of Kechel Rajaya. Only one of the men involved in the murder of Zogreddi, namely Sintal Rajaya, left Kakishnur soon after the event and settled in Chintapalli beyond the State border.

Another murder among Reddis occurred some four years ago in Katkur, when Sonkal Komreddi of Katkur was killed by Matla Motaya, who subsequently went to live on the British side of the Godavari. It is rumoured that the murderer cut off the head and the fingers of the victim and buried them before he threw the corpse into the Godavari. Of this incident I could obtain no eye-witness account, but whether the alleged details are rumour or fact, it is of interest that the Reddis do consider such mutilations of a corpse as within the bounds of probability.

We have now come to the end of our evidence from the Reddi country and are in a position to review the whole complex of human sacrifice and associated belief. Two facts stand out as significant: the fear of *patadu donga* seeking victims for human sacrifice still has the power to inspire fear throughout the Reddi country, and the festival on the Papi Konda is fundamentally different from most other Reddi rites.

Let us specify the first statement. Whether the practice of kidnapping victims for human sacrifice does exist or does not, the belief in its existence is a cultural reality, just as the belief in deities and spirits or in the powers of witches and magicians. It finds concrete social expression in the suspicion with which at certain times Reddis view each other and particularly visitors from other villages, and occasionally in the misdirected action against persons erroneously taken for *patudu donga*, as in the case of the luckless Reddi of Rampa, who had already received a sound beating before he could disclose his identity to his panicky fellow-villagers. The scare of *patudu donga* appears to be confined to two seasons of the year, *i.e.*, to the time before harvest and the time of the preparation

of the fields before sowing and this suggests a connection with agricultural rites. Another reason for the sacrifice of human beings is said to be the necessity of appeasing Maveli Devata, who would otherwise spread death and disease in the village neglecting her cult. The strong belief in this inexorable necessity may account for the curious attitude towards those villages reputed to worship Maveli Devata. There is neither horror, indignation or contempt in the comments on the practices of Maveli's devotees; though all Reddis are naturally anxious that no member of their own village should fall victim to *patudu donga*, they seem to recognise that the procuring the sacrifice of victims is unavoidable and more or less legitimate; for to leave the goddess unappeased would probably bring even greater harm to the whole countryside. This idea may be one of the reasons why, in spite of their recurring panic, they are generally averse from discussing the matter and certainly never seek the protection of outsiders against this real or imaginary danger.

It seems hardly probable that so general a belief as that of *patudu donga* and the practices connected with the cult of Maveli Devata, should be without any foundation. But whether half a century or only ten years have passed since the last victims were sacrificed to avert her wrath, or whether spasmodical revivals of the ritual occur even today it is impossible to decide. However, insistent a Reddi may be about the existence of *patudu donga*, none of my informants admitted having known a man, woman or child who had actually disappeared in this mysterious way, and the evidence of those Reddis of Tumileru, who pretend they have actually put a band of *patudu donga* to flight need not be taken too seriously; two harmless parties meeting in the dark may have easily mistaken each other for kidnappers.

If on the other hand the practice is not yet dead, detection by outsiders is well nigh impossible, as long as the Reddis believe in the inevitability of the sacrifices and are too afraid, both of the wrath of the goddess and the revenge of her devotees, to bring the practice to an end. With settlements widely scattered over hills difficult of access, and frequently shifted to other sites, and a population unstable and fluctuating from one village to the other, the disappearance of a person must remain unknown unless it is reported by relations and co-villagers. Under these circumstances it would be just as rash to say that kidnapping belongs to the past, as it would be irresponsible to assert its continued existence. The material here presented does not allow of any conclusion, but in an area where a documented human sacrifice occurred as late as 1879, and which borders on the home of Meriah sacrifice, the *onus probandi* lies not only with those who consider the spasmodic occurrence of ritual murder in recent times a plausible possibility.

In the case of the famous festival on Papi Konda we have only one expressive statement—that of the Reddis of Tumileru—

expressly linking it with the practice of human sacrifice. On the other hand there are innumerable indications that secrecy surrounded this festival, as well as its scene and the ritual objects. The nearer one comes to Papi Konda, the greater becomes the Reddis' reluctance to discuss it. In far off villages like Errametta and even Katkur, men may be found who admit having attended the ceremony in their youth, while every Reddi of Tekpalli, Kakishnur and Parantapalli will protest that he has never been to the feast on Papi Konda, the celebration of which has long been abandoned. This attitude would be explicable if they associated the festival with a cult, which they considered likely to shed opprobrium on its devotees in the eyes of outsiders, even though the central rite of this cult had long been discontinued at the time when they themselves took part in the festival.

An analysis of its description by Anel Venkatreddi reveals several features, which differentiate the Vana Devudu Panduga from all other Reddi feasts.<sup>1</sup> Its whole organization lay in the hands of a few men, the *pujari* of the Pogal clan and his assistants, who alone furnished the food and sacrificial animals for the assembly. The sacrificial offerings remained unseen and the central rite of the feast, the invocation of the deities and the slaughter of the victim or victims occurred in a secret place, hidden from the eyes of the crowd. Only men of the Pogal clan had access to this place, apparently a cave, and to safe-guard themselves against any disturbance they issued warnings to other men not to wander about lest they should fall victim to the deity. Secrecy of this nature is otherwise entirely foreign to Reddi ritual in which the offering of food and the killing of the sacrificial animals takes place in front of the worshippers and constitutes the climax of the ceremony. In the Papi Konda feast only the blood partly mixed with rice was shown to the assembly, but there seems to have been no visible indication of the nature of the victims. Equally unique is the use of jealousy guarded ritual objects such as two brass plates or gongs. All these elements fit badly into the general picture of Reddi culture, and it is not unlikely that their origin lies in a far less primitive civilization. The scattering of blood-soaked rice in the forest, on the hand, is a familiar Reddi custom, and seems to be indeed only a variation of the sowing of seed-grain soaked in blood during the Bhumi Devata Panduga, the rites in honour of the Earth-Mother.

Mystery veils not only the main rite of the feast, but also the identity of the deity in whose service it is performed. The name of the feast, Vana Devudu Panduga, suggests the rain-god as the central figure of the feast, but although he and the four other so

---

<sup>1</sup> Except perhaps the rites in honour of Maveli Devata, of which I have no detailed information.

called 'Panduvulus' are undoubtedly invoked on this occasion, there is no certainty that he was regarded as the recipient of all the sacrifices. Anel Venkatreddi speaks indeed of a female *konda devata*, who licks up the sacrificial blood in the shape of a tiger and is believed to devour any person straying about in the jungle during the night of the feast. *Konda devata*, however, means only mountain deity, and all Reddis agree that there are many *konda devata*, both male and female. When revisiting the Reddi country in 1943 I enquired once more about the feast on Papi Konda and several men admitted then that not only Vana Devudu but also Maveli Devata was worshipped on that occasion. This makes it probable that if in the past humans were sacrificed on Papi Konda, this particular rite was performed in honour of Maveli Devata and not of the Rain-God. For Maveli Devata is the goddess reputed to accept only human sacrifices, and usually worshipped on hill-tops, while practically all other Reddi ceremonies take place at no great distance from the villages.

Summarizing our argument, I believe we are justified in saying that strong evidence speaks in favour of the former occurrence of human sacrifice among Reddis. The theory that at one time human beings have been sacrificed on Papi Konda provides a plausible explanation for all the known facts, as well as for the extraordinary reaction of the Reddis in the vicinity at the mere mention of the festival, none of which can to my mind be rendered intelligible by any alternative hypothesis.

Against this one may argue that a conclusion reached by inference, even though of high probability, is somewhat unsatisfactory in a matter where it should be possible to procure direct proof. No doubt if we were dealing with events lying several centuries back and our information was not the statements of living persons, but descriptions and allusions in contemporary documents, we should have little hesitation in regarding the existence of human sacrifice at that period as proven with reasonable certainty. But in our case the position is different. For can we accept a conclusion based on indirect evidence while there are men alive who might be able to tell us the full facts? The relevant question is whether or not the living eye-witnesses could be induced to change their minds and take us into their confidence. Under the circumstances prevailing I believe that such a possibility hardly exists, except if an investigator had the opportunity of spending several years in intimate contact with the Reddis. For here we have a situation quite different from that of a primitive tribe with little experience of strangers withholding a religious or ritual secret from the uninitiated. Sympathy and patience may there break the barriers within a comparatively short time. But the Reddis have already reaped full experience of outsiders and realize only too well the



inconvenience which an injudicious word and the consequent police enquiries cause not only to those suspected but to the whole village. They know, moreover, that human sacrifice is regarded by the authorities in much the same light as murder, and that once they admitted their participation in the rite in past years, nobody would trust their assertion that it has since been abandoned; nor have they any assurance, that even a former attendance at a feast connected with human sacrifice would not be made the subject of persecution. Silence is therefore their best policy, even towards those whom they recognize as well disposed and understanding. For no demonstration of sympathy can outweigh, unless accompanied by prolonged and concrete achievements for the Reddis' benefit, the experience of half a century.

Now that we have conceded the probability of human sacrifice having at some time played a role in Reddi ritual, we may scrutinize once more the cases of homicide already described. The murderers of Kechel Rajaya are reported to have performed a *puja* for a *konda devata* before the murder and to have scattered the victim's blood mixed with rice over their cut bamboos and their fields. Of the latter deed they are even said to have boasted in public. The belief in the fertilizing power of human blood which lies at the root of the whole head-hunting complex as well as of the Meriah sacrifice is too well known to need any demonstration, and nobody will doubt that if rice mixed with Kechel Rajaya's blood was scattered over the murderer's fields it was done to increase their fertility. That Vental Kanaya mentioned the *puja* for a *konda devata* as proof of the Suntre brothers' deliberate intention to murder is only understandable if human sacrifice had once formed part of a cult known to Reddis. We remember that during the Vana Devudu Panduga blood-soaked rice was scattered through the forest, and that a *konda devata* was believed to lick up the blood of the victims. The same practice of scattering blood-soaked rice is moreover connected with the feast for Konda Razu, who is usually described as one of the *konda devata*, and though at present the grain is mixed with the blood of a pig, the Reddis of Tumileru asserted that formerly human blood was used for that purpose.

From whatever side we regard the circumstances of Kechel Rajaya's death, we cannot escape the conclusion that the Reddis themselves believe in the ritual use of human blood. Whether on that particular occasion this use was actually made and whether the murderers of Kechel Rajaya had performed a *puja* for a *konda devata* before the deed, is irrelevant in this connection. The assertion that such a rite was performed and the fact that this assertion is given credence by many people in Kakishnur seem to prove the Reddis' familiarity with such practices.

The only ethnologically interesting element in the death of Zogreddi is the allegation that his murderers drenched a cloth

with his blood and buried it. I fail to see any reason why the widow should have invented this detail, which makes no difference to the guilt of the men accused of the deed, or how the rumour could have arisen, unless the drenching of a cloth with the victim's blood is a recognized method of preserving human blood for later ritual use. And this tallies with the account given by the Reddis of Rampa village of the human sacrifices for Maveli Devata, during which a cloth was soaked with blood in order to serve as a substitute for a victim on future occasions.

To describe the two cases of homicide in question as ritual murder would undoubtedly be unjustified; for their primary motive lay presumably in the economic field. What the accumulated evidence does justify, however, is the assumption, that in the case of Kechel Rajaya the victim's blood was ultimately used for ritual purposes and that in Buzar Zogreddi's case such a use was meditated if not accomplished. And even those who may consider that the grounds for this assumption are insufficient must admit that the belief in the ritual value of human blood must be firmly rooted in the Reddis' minds if allegations such as those brought forward after the death of both Kechel Rajaya and Buzar Zogreddi could be made and generally accepted.

For ethnology it is of little importance whether a custom is abandoned a few decades sooner or later, once it has become clear that it has no chance of survival in the face of modern developments. Human sacrifice and all its kindred practices are doomed in the Reddi country, if they are not already dead, and isolated instances of the ritual use of human blood interest us mainly as spontaneous expressions of beliefs still lingering in people's minds. Though probably familiar to most, and practised by at least certain sections of the Reddis for some time, human sacrifice does not appear to constitute a very ancient element in their culture. Its perpetration seems to have been confined to a few localities, and there is no indication that the average Reddi village community would ever have aspired to the securing or sacrificing of human victims. A comparison with the head-hunting rites of Nagas or the Meriah sacrifices of Khonds, which occupied a central and dominating position in tribal life, is therefore hardly permissible, and it seems that the origin of the practice lies outside the precincts of Reddi culture. Where is it then, that we must seek for its source?

The most striking connection with customs of other populations is afforded by the cult of Maveli Devata. For Maveli is evidently identical with the goddess Mamili of the Koyas of whom the Rev. J. Cain states that her favours are always sought when the young crops are springing up and that in years gone by human sacrifices

were often offered to her.<sup>1</sup> In this case too, her devotees were suspected of kidnapping strangers in their search for victims. That the ritual use of human blood in connection with agricultural activities still prevails among Marias of Bastar can be seen from a recent incident at Maddar in the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari quoted by W. V. Grigson :

'A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru Zamindari (*i.e.*, Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla<sup>2</sup> or Bison horn influence ; the true Hill Maria would not venture down to Maddar) before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric ; such an offering was found near the Maddar woman's cot.'<sup>2</sup> I think, there can be no doubt, that this practice belongs to the same ritual complex as human sacrifice, and the quoted incident is clear evidence of the still existing belief in the fertilizing power of human blood among the Gond population of Bastar. It is only one step from the soaking of rice seed in the water in which the victim's blood has been dissolved, to the mixing of grain with human blood, and the alleged action of Kechel Rajaya's murderers gains credibility in the light of Grigson's evidence.

We have seen that the Vana Devudu Panduga is closely associated with the cult of the Pandava brothers, who play otherwise no great role in Reddi ritual. The Koyas, on the other hand, pay great reverence to the Pandava brothers, and Cain states that Bhima is often invoked at ceremonies ; the Reddis themselves say that Bhimana is a Koya god and that the Koyas perform the Bhimana Panduga in order to induce rain. Thus both the cult of Maveli Devata and the rites on the Papi Konda are suggestive of Koya influence. Moreover, in view of the fact that the southern part of Malkanagiri, once a hot-bed of Meriah sacrifice, is largely inhabited by Koyas, there seems to be a strong probability that the complex of human sacrifice belongs in this part of the country rather to Koya than to Reddi culture.

<sup>1</sup> J. Cain, *The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond*, J.A.S. Beng., Vol. XIII (1881), pp. 413 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (Oxford 1938), p. 221.

Although rumours may have exaggerated the prevalence of human sacrifice in Bastar, there is no doubt that the practice had an established place in Gond culture. In the course of the last ten years three cases of human sacrifice have come up for trial in Bastar State; four of the perpetrators of the crime were convicted and sentenced to death, while in one case the accused was acquitted by the appellate court but later admitted to have performed the sacrifice in accordance with a vow.

Among the Raj Gonds of Hyderabad there is also a strong tradition of human sacrifice and I know a man who three years ago escaped only by an extraordinary piece of luck from becoming the victim of such a rite. Men of Netnur, a village of Utnur Taluq in the Adilabad District, decided to sacrifice a man to Hendwa Pen hoping thereby to benefit their standing crops. One evening they ambushed a Gond of Koinur, who was on his way back from the fields, gagged him, trussed him to a bamboo pole like a pig and carried him to the forest. The victim told me that knowing what his captors were out for he prayed to his clan-god to save him and that his prayer was heard: a tiger appeared and growled at the party. In terror the captors dropped the victim who managed ultimately to free himself and find his way home. The event had an inconclusive sequel in court, but aroused curiously little alarm or resentment among the Gonds of the neighbourhood. There was no social boycott of the kidnappers, and some of the men to whom I talked of the incident seemed more amused than shocked. The deity who accepts none but human victims is Hendwa Pen, but there is a belief that on occasions clan-deities (*persa penk*) also demanded the offerings of 'two legged goats,' and in one such instance the worshippers, loath to comply with the deity's wishes, dropped the idol of the exigent deity into the Penganga River. The practice—now forming part of the ritual of some clan feasts—of setting up a large marrow on wooden legs and cutting it in two with a single stroke of a sword, before the slaughtering of the sacrificial animals, also seems suggestive of the time when human victims were sacrificed to the clan-deities.

It must be remembered, however, that not only aborigines are—or were—addicted to human sacrifice but that until a few centuries ago in Jeypore and other Hindu States human victims were publicly sacrificed on various occasions. Isolated cases of ritual murder, committed in secret, occurred moreover among the plains populations of the Telugu country until recent years, and the belief in the efficacy of human sacrifice is not dead even among the higher Hindu castes. In 1936 a man in Guntur District killed a child in the belief that the sacrifice would help him to unearth a treasure and was subsequently condemned to transportation for life. In 1939 a man of the Kammar caste from Tekpaka, a village

close to the Reddi country, was charged with having sacrificed a Koya child to improve his rice-field ; though he was acquitted in the Sessions Court for lack of proof, the very occurrence of charge and trial surely shows how real even in our days is the idea of human sacrifice, not only to Reddis, but also to the Hindu population of the Godavari valley.

Human sacrifice, in the form in which it seems to have been practised by certain groups of Reddis, was thus not a custom peculiar to them alone, and the available evidence favours indeed the assumption that the Reddis have adopted the rite from a neighbouring population.

# THE REPRODUCTIVE LIFE OF MALER WOMEN

BY S. S. SARKAR

IN the course of twin investigations among the aboriginals of the Rajmahal Hills I found it necessary to have primarily a knowledge of the reproductive life of the womenfolk among whom the complex phenomenon of human twinning was to be studied. Information about three pairs of living twins and a pair of bisex dead twins was obtained from the Maler village of Bathbhanga (Bungalow Taljhari)<sup>1</sup> and so this village was visited several times in January-February 1940. Of the three pairs of living twins only one set, two girls, was found alive, whereas one partner of each of the other two sets, both two boys, died long ago. A pair of male twins to Lamka Mesa and Gangi were also born on 15 February 1940. Both these two sets of twins were living when I left the place in March 1940. They will form the subject of future study, if they live to grow older.

An aboriginal village having five such twin births led the author to investigate the hereditary background. It was found very difficult to put the matter in the proper genealogical form; firstly, the parents of the twins were young and they could not give the pedigree details and secondly, it was noticed that there were so many intermarriages within the same village, including the mother of the female twin, who was born and married in this village, it was thought that some relationship could be established if the reproductive details of the womenfolk of the whole village were first studied. The work could not be finished then though the reproductive details of the women were obtained, which form the subject of this paper.

Bathbhanga is one of the largest Maler villages I have so far come across. It is situated on a broad, flat-topped hill and is divided into two settlements—one being situated at a slightly higher altitude. There were 80 huts in all; 36 in the upper settlement and 44 in the lower. Reproductive details had to be obtained in a somewhat roundabout manner and were collected with the help of a semiliterate villager of the rank of a Naib. The following details were obtained:—name and age of the husband, name and age of the wife, numbers of dead and living children of each sex. The relationships between the different villagers were noted by the author but as mentioned already this part of the work could not be completed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Taljhari Bungalow was later on found to have a number of other twin births. A Santal family of Harinkol had two successive pairs of twins, all of whom were dead and twinning was found to be hereditary in the family. A Napit family of Dudkol had a pair of female twins then living and the family history revealed other twin births in the father's sib. There were a pair of Santal Doshad female twins in Beldarchak and they were thoroughly investigated and found dizygotic in origin.

Data were obtained from 65 families. There was only one bachelor about 40 years old. The Sardar of the village, a young man of about 30 years of age, had three wives simultaneously and was maintaining a number of houses. The following table shows the statistics of the 65 families :—

TABLE I

Hus- bands	Wives	Children					
		Living		Dead			Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Sex un- known	
65	75	53	85	33	62	25	278

One of the husbands died about 4 years ago while of the 75 wives 11 were dead as first wives of their husbands. They have been included here because of their surviving children. There were 3 widowers, 2 of them having children. Of the 64 living women there were 6 barren, all of whom had passed the child-bearing age. 5 of the 6 barren women were taken as second wives of their husbands after the deaths of their first wives, and all of them, excepting one, had children. It was doubtful whether the second wives were married as virgins; they were probably widows and remarried in this village towards the close of their reproductive age. There were 4 childless marriages—one in a girl of 18 married 2 years ago and another in a girl of 22 married 5-6 years. The other two women were aged about 35 and 45 respectively and were married to two young men each about 30 years old. The one aged 35 was married about 12-13 years with no issue while the latter was a widow and had issue through her first husband. They were married 9 years ago.

The average children per family is 4.28, of which the number of living children is 2.12. The living sex ratio works up to 1 : 1.6. A high secondary sex ratio is indicative of dwindling population<sup>1</sup> and it would have been possible to know this ratio correctly if the sexes of 25 children were known. The secondary sex ratio, however, appears to be high as omitting the 25 children of unknown sex the ratio comes up to 106 : 147.

<sup>1</sup> F. A. E. Crew—Sex Ratio—Presidential Address, Brit. Asscn. Advancement of Science, 1937, (Zoology).

It was very soon found out after the collection of the data that there were quite a large number of intermarriages within the village. Of the 75 wives 27 (36%) belong to this village. They vary between the ages of 18 and 55, which show that both the mother and the daughter are born and married in the same village (as in the case of the female twin). This obviously shows the amount of inbreeding occurring among this folk and this coupled with twinning will form the subject of future enquiry.

Information regarding the total fecundity of the Maler women could be obtained from 10 families only. All of them attained menopause. The exact period could be obtained in only one woman who was then about 42 and stopped menstruating about 3 years ago. The data is shown in Table II.

TABLE II

	No. of hus- bands	No. of Wives	Children					
			Living		Dead			Total
			Male	Female	Male	Female	Sex un- known	
Maler ..	10	10	12	11	12	18	5	58
Santal ..	10	13	16	15	12	17	..	61

The fecundity of the Maler women of Bathbhangra comes up to 5.8. This smaller group also shows higher child mortality than that shown above (Table I).

The Santal data were collected from the village of Dudkol (Bungalow Taljhari). The details could be better obtained than those of the Maler. The menopause age was somewhat correctly obtained from the age of the last child. Of the 10 husbands one had 2 wives simultaneously while another had 3 wives<sup>1</sup>, all married after the death of the preceding. One of the 3 wives died childless.

The 11 Santal wives attained their menopause between 40 and 46; 1 at 42, 1 at 43, 2 at 44-45, 1 at 45, 1 at 46 and information regarding one was not available. The village headman and his old interested wife helped with information about two other women of the same village having attained menopause. The sexes of their dead and living children could not be given though their total number of births could be had. Adding these to the former

<sup>1</sup> One of them was divorced by her first husband.



data and omitting the polygamous unions stated above it was found as follows :—

TABLE III

Husbands	Wives	Children		
		Living	Dead	Total
10	10	32	26	58

The fecundity of the Santal women thus appears to be very similar to that of the Maler women. The data, however, is too small for generalization. The two peoples seem to differ in the survival rate of children; more children die among the Malers than the Santals and this is probably due to the hard lives of the former on the rapidly deforesting hills.

# MATRIARCHY IN KERALA

By L. A. KRISHNA IYER

THE mothers are the basis and bond of the primitive social group. The only relation which is taken into account in the conceptions and sentiments of the members of such a group is the maternal relation. Kinship and descent are reckoned exclusively through the women; the relationship through the father is not taken into consideration, but only the relation through the mother. There are few things to which primitive peoples who have retained a matriarchal constitution are so profoundly averse as to allowing any of their girls or women to leave the group. The males, on the other hand, are not regarded as integral and vital parts of the group. They are necessary to its protection and economic subsistence. But they are not essential to the continuity and constitution of the social group itself which consists of the succession of mothers and daughters, and in which all males are but offshoots of the main female stem of which the group as a stable social unit consists.<sup>1</sup> Briffault considers that the above features of social organisation are the most fundamental concerning the structure of human society among all peoples which have preserved a matriarchal form of social organization and respect for them is the foundation of their social life.

Mother-right means inheritance in the female line with regard to relationship as well as to property. Inheritance from the mother's brother to her son (that is, his nephew) is also to be regarded as a matriarchal form of inheritance in the female line. Consequently, a man becomes the owner or at least the guardian of a matriarchal joint family's property or the political ruler in a matriarchal state. His heirs are, in the case of matriarchal survivals, his sister's sons, not his own sons, who are regarded as foreign to their father's clan or family. Thus also this form of inheritance will be considered matriarchal<sup>2</sup>.

The matriarchally influenced social groups are found in the Khasi-Garo Hills of Assam and in Kerala comprising Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The latter includes the neighbouring parts of South India.

Kerala is a narrow fertile strip of coast, exceedingly suitable for agriculture and gardening, especially for the growing of rice and cocoanuts. A dense population is strikingly isolated here from the rest of India by the barrier of the Western Ghats. The shady jungles at the foot and the cool meadows at the top of these mountains, barren and shut off from plainsmen, gave shelter and subsistence to the shy jungle tribes, remnants of the old Weddidi

<sup>1</sup> R. Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 250-251.

<sup>2</sup> O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India* (Milford, 1941), p. 7.

peoples, who may have at one time populated great parts of the world. Here they lived in splendid isolation during later following periods, surrounded by highly civilized peoples, being themselves restricted to the small chain of mountains and jungles, where a culture has left traces resembling the most primitive primieval culture. By force of environmental necessity, Kerala became a cultural backwater, which, in contrast to the adjoining Western Ghats, has developed a high grade of civilization of its own<sup>1</sup>. The existence of a Negrito strain in the aboriginal population of South India has received additional evidence in Travancore. Spirally curved hair is found among the Uralis, Kanikkar, Malavetans, the Malapantarams, and Vishavans. They were followed by the Proto-Australoids represented by the Malavetans, Muthuvans, and the Kanikkar. They were followed by the Dravidians who are represented by the Nayars, the Vellalas, and others.

In Travancore and other parts of the Malabar Coast, both primitive and certain advanced castes like the Nayars have retained the matriarchal system. The theory that matriarchy corresponds with lower and patriarchy with higher peoples and groups no longer holds the field. Recent researches have shown that there was a time when in certain parts of the world patriarchal and matriarchal institutions existed separately and were in their own territory the decisive, determining, motivating cultural factors.

At one time, the two extensive regions comprising the interior of Asia (including Eastern Europe) and the interior of Africa must have been patriarchal. That is to say, their coasts were at the same time under matriarchal sway. Patriarchy in its least modified form is still prevalent among the Africans of the Steppes<sup>2</sup>.

The hypothesis now accepted by anthropologists is that, amongst the earliest savages who lived by hunting, the man took his wife to himself, and that the husband, wife, and children all wandered together forming a patriarchal family. There was no well defined system of inheritance among them, as there was nothing to inherit, but the relationship that existed was patriarchal. My researches in Travancore tend to the same view. One section of the Malapantarams, who lead the life of nomadic hunters, affords an example of this earliest form of patriarchy. When the savage passed from the hunting to the agricultural stage, patriarchy developed into matriarchy<sup>3</sup>.

The system of tracing kinship through the mother is still in vogue among the pre-Dravidian hill-tribes. The relation found to exist between a man and his sister's children among the Muthu-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Count Keyserling, *The Book of Marriage*; Leo Frobenius, *Marriage and Matriarchy*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> L. A., Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. III, p. 120.

vans and the Mannans may be a survival of the ancient system of matriarchy under which a woman's children belonged to her family and her husband had no proprietary right or authority over them. Under the system of female kinship, there was no change of clanship after marriage, and both husband and wife retained their own clans, and the children belonged to the mother's clan. This is the case among the Kanikkar, Muthuvan, Mannan, Malayarayan, Vishavan, Paraya, and Pulayan. The clan is still the pillar of their social culture. The family was continued through the mother. All rank and property descended through her. Matrilineal descent is now fighting a losing game <sup>1</sup>.

In regard to inheritance of property, the right to inherit a dead man's property was co-extensive with the duty of performing his obsequies and offering sacrifices to his spirit. It is interesting to observe that the nephew is the chief mourner among the Thantapulayas, and he observes pollution for sixteen days. The wife and children do not observe any pollution. Inheritance is in the female line among them. It is the same thing among the Muthuvans and Mannans among whom mother-right prevails. It is a mixture of matriarchy and patriarchy among the Kanikkar, Malavetans, and Paliyans. Among the Uralis, the nephew is the chief mourner even now, but the children of the dead man inherit the property, because they have been in joint possession of it. The nephew is the chief mourner among the Nayadis. He observes pollution for sixteen days, while the son observes it for ten days. Sons now inherit the property. A similar change has come over the Eastern Pulayas <sup>2</sup>.

The evolution of the family transformed the system of inheritance, but left that of dignity untouched. In every primitive community, age is a source of reverence and influence. Considerations of fitness made it desirable to entrust the management of common interests of the family to the eldest and most experienced member, and this has produced collateral inheritance by brothers. Among Muthuvans, a man's property goes to his elder or younger sister's son with the reservation that the property is first enjoyed by his younger brother before it passes to his nephew. Debts are inherited by the nephew as property is. The Mannans have the same system of inheritance. Outside India the custom prevails in Sumatra, where property and rank are enjoyed by brothers before they pass to sister's children <sup>3</sup>.

The inheritance of the widow of the deceased is placed in the same category as property. The claims of the mother to subsis-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, p. 121.

tence out of her husband's property make her remain with her sons. These claims are, according to Starcke, connected with the customs that included her in her brother-in-law's inheritance. A Mannan marries the widow of his deceased brother. Among the Western Pulayas, it is said that, before a man dies, he says, 'Oralum olakkayum Anantharavanu.' By this declaration, the nephew of the Pulaya inherits the mortar and pestle and the youngest wife of his uncle. He keeps his aunt as his wife. This custom has now died out <sup>1</sup>.

McLennan asserts that the brother's inheritance of widow and property occurs where polyandry was previously practised, but Starcke and Westermarck consider it irrational to seek for causes of connection between a widow and her brother-in-law in polyandry, and the exercise of the marital right in a husband's lifetime would only become a necessary condition, if carnal considerations formed the corner-stone in the development of the family. The life and habits of most of the primitive tribes of Travancore do not justify the conclusion, as their customs were not formed under the influence of considerations of enjoyment. Mother-right exists in some of the tribes, but its days are numbered owing to the impact of modern civilization <sup>2</sup>.

South India was peopled by the Dravidians before the advent of the Aryans and the various sections of the Dravidian stock who lived in different geographical regions developed occupations and cultures suited to their particular environments. That branch which occupied the hilly tract on the west coast lived originally by hunting. Later on, when they migrated to the narrow strip of land, they took to agriculture. The soil was rich, nature was bountiful, and conditions were favourable for cultivation. The labour involved in the tillage of the soil and the growing of crops being light, the women found it possible to attend to this work, and the men continued to be engaged on hunting. The women who were the first agriculturists became the owners of the cultivated land, which descended from mother to daughter, and thus the matriarchal system came into being. When once this was established, it found a congenial soil for its growth on the west coast. Here the men who were originally hunters became fighters. They had no need to worry themselves for food, as it was supplied by their women. Their only business consisted in protecting their country from the intrusion of strangers. They had to leave their homes and go to war, whenever called upon to do so by their chiefs; many lost their lives in war. The wives and children could not remain in their husband's homes in safety. They had to look to their maternal homes for protection and sustenance. Such was

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. III, p. 122:

the condition of Kerala till about the 18th century. No wonder then that matriarchy thrived under such circumstances<sup>1</sup>. 'Women played an important part in the kingdom of Magadha, an important Dravidian city. Existing Dravidian tribes in Northern India display strong matriarchal tendencies. The Bhahikas of the Punjab, the Newar, who appear to be the kinsfolk of the Nayars of the Nayars, and the Arattas, all have mother-right. Mother-right is important in the Dravidian country in the south. In the words of Mr Richards, there is abundant evidence that inheritance through females was at one time general throughout South India. It would seem that a matrilineal system of inheritance was a general feature of the sub-culture of the south, on which the Brahmanic super-culture was imposed<sup>2</sup>.

The Nayars form a typical example of the Dravidians in Kerala. They have an extraordinary respect for the mother and the elder sister. The tarwad or clan consists of all descendants in the female line of a common male ancestor. The household was constituted by the mother and her children, sisters and brothers. No woman left her home to take up residence with her husband. No husband formed part of it. The families constituting a clan are related to one another by community of pollution. Inter-marriage between members of the same clan is prohibited. The only socially valid marriages are those in which the parties are of equal standing with one another or in which the bridegroom belongs to a clan superior to that to which the bride belongs. Children belonged to their mother's brother whose name occurs in theirs. The family was dearer to a Nayar than anything else in the world.

The Aryan Nambutiri contributed to the preservation and strengthening of the matriarchal system. With a view to prevent the disintegration of their family estates, they adopted the custom that only the eldest member of the family should marry in their caste and that the junior male members should find their spouses in the Kshatriya and Nayar castes, with being subject to the obligation of providing for their sustenance and other worldly wants. As long as the family unit consisted of a woman and her children, matriarchy remained a sound institution, promoting the orderly progress and the social unity of the communities concerned. Its degeneration set in only when, under the impact of western civilisation, the tendencies of the educated section began to draw them to the universal system of patriarchy. Under matriarchy both Nayar husbands and wives enjoyed the utmost freedom to dissolve their marriage alliance. The dissolution entailed no hardship on the wife or children, because they were maintained by the

<sup>1</sup> N. Kunjan Pillai, *Census of India 1931*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun* (New York, 1923), p. 245.

tarwad. Everything went off well so long as the Karanavan was a true Marumakkathayi in form and spirit. The impact of modern civilization tended to make them less matriarchal and troubles arose. The women had to look to their husbands for their maintenance. The educated section of the community then began to agitate for legislation to validate the Sambandham form of marriage. A law was enacted in 1912 regulating marriage, succession, and family management of the Nayars. It legalized the Sambandham as a valid marriage for all legal purposes. It penalized polygamy and polyandry and made it obligatory on the part of the husband to maintain his wife and minor children. It altered the customary law of inheritance by conferring the right of inheritance of a Nayar male's property (self-acquired and separate) on his wife and children, and made provision for the partition of the tarwad properties among its members. This paved the way for the complete overhauling of the social organization of a community. The fact that 33,903 tarwads partitioned their properties within five years of the passing of the Regulation is proof positive of the eagerness of the community to avail itself of this permissive legislation. The obligation thrown on the husband or father to maintain the wife or children, combined with the right of the wife and the children to inherit the self-acquired property of the husband or father, made hypergamous marriages very rare. The restrictions placed on the dissolution of marriage has made divorce less frequent. The Regulation sounded the death-knell of matriarchy and ushered the dawn of patriarchy <sup>1</sup>.

It has now been found by the Nayar community that no other legislation has ruined them more quickly than the Act that enabled the individual partition of the Nayars. The community that was the backbone of the State has been disrupted and divided. The Nayar community has begun to pause, to take stock of the whole situation and they have begun to feel that if this individual partition has removed certain ills, it has brought more evils than it has removed, and that the whole position has to be revalued and reassessed. To go back is difficult, but yet the community should go back, or else it is finished and lost <sup>2</sup>.

Speaking on an important occasion, the Hon'ble Sadasyatilakan T. K. Velu Pillai said, 'It was to some of us a sorrowful spectacle to see laws being enacted by the old Legislative Council in a manner as to dismember a powerful community, which has stood for strength, sobriety, and patriotism. The Nayars were behaving in a friendly manner with the Izhuvans, with the Malayala Brahmans, with the Kshatriyas and others, and because theirs was a powerful community, they were considered to be leaders of public opinion

<sup>1</sup> N. Kunjan Pillai, *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 166f.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. M. A. Proceedings, Vol. XIX, No. 5, pp. 363-365.

in certain matters. The movement towards makkathayam was sponsored by the Nayar Service Society which led a militant movement against the last vestiges of the defenceless Marumakkathayam system. The protests made against the dismemberment of families went unheeded and the law was substantially changed by legislative processes. It is claimed that in 16 years history has proved that the modified system is a most unpatriotic act, an unworkable and indefensible system, one which has dismembered not only Nayar tarwads, but also other Marumakkathayam tarwads. It is being increasingly felt that the Bill has tended to the dismemberment of the community and steps should be taken to resuscitate it from its present despondency by its representatives.'

From the social point of view, matriarchy cannot, in any way, be regarded as inferior to patriarchy. The two great regulations of early civilization, matriarchy and exogamy, have nothing about them fantastic, outrageous, absurd, but are the practical outcome of the practical purposes of people like-minded with ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Reuter, *The Family*, p. 87.



# NOTES ON A KONDH TOUR

BY VERRIER ELWIN

AT the end of November 1943, I visited the Khuttia Kondhs of the south-western Baliguda Hills in the company of Mr H. V. Blackburn who has been for many years working timber in Bastar, Jeypore, Kalahandi and the present area. He has a remarkable knowledge of the country where he has worked, and his friendliness and kindness to the aboriginals has won him a host of friends: I could not have had a better introduction to the people of this wild and lonely country. I was touring mainly in order to collect specimens and to take photographs for my book *Art in Tribal India*. But as I was able also to note down a number of things about a tribe which has not, I think, been visited by any anthropologist for some time, I am presenting an account of my tour in diary form.

23 November 1943.—We left Raipur this evening by the train which runs down to Vizianagaram with tickets for Ambodala, the jumping-off place for the Kondh country. As always in Orissa, we reached our destination in the middle of the night and went to sleep in the Railway Rest-house.

24 November 1943.—Blackburn has a Depot here, and he had previously arranged for a party of carriers to take our camp-kit and food up into the hills. We managed to get started shortly after ten and made our way up through pleasant wooded and hilly country. After a couple of hours I began to get fever, but we decided to go ahead and reach our camp. We passed through a number of Pano and Gaur villages—Sundipadar, Bandhaguda, Mulmunda, Dhanimaska and Goiballi. On the way I saw something of the anti-malarial work that is being done, and done well, by the railway people. All along there was the axe-cultivation of the Panos and Uriya Paiks. At Goiballi there was very extensive cutting of the forest by Gaurs who have the damaging practice of killing the taller trees, leaving them as bean-stalks and thus creating what I have called 'ghost forests.'

Already even down here I have heard the word Meriah. The whole countryside is full of traditions of human sacrifice.

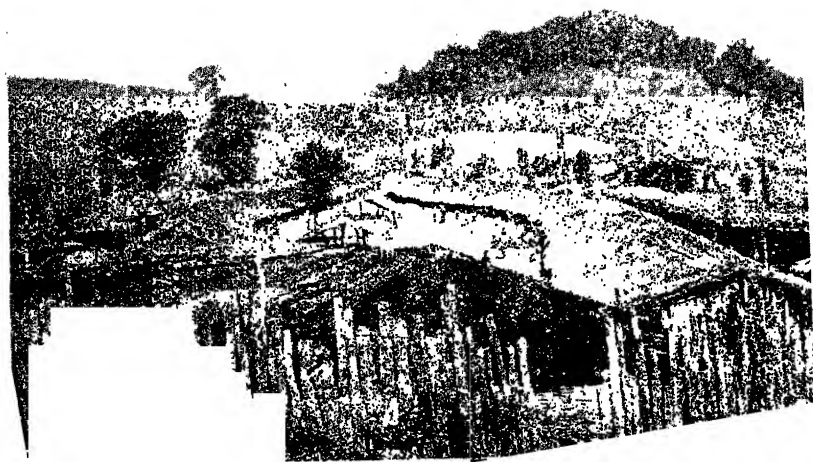
At last we reached our base-camp, Bilamal, which is a mixed Paik and Pano village, and were welcomed by Charles Needham, Blackburn's assistant. I went to bed immediately and dosed myself thoroughly with quinine.

25 November 1943.—Stayed in bed all the morning and read proofs. In the afternoon drew maps; in the evening we collected a number of people and got hold of the lie of the land. Ambodala is in the Jeypore Zamindari, but we have now crossed into the Ganjam District and are among the south-western hills of the Bali-



KUTTIA KHOND YOUTH ↑

↓ RANGAPARU VILLAGE





guda Sub-Division. The Khuttia Kondhs here call themselves 'Kui.' Beyond Baliguda, in the more open country, they are Desi Kui, and I am told that the two sections cannot understand one another's speech. Very few of the Kondhs here know Oriya, but many of the Panos who trade with them have learned the Kondh language. This whole area is divided into a number of Muttas, which I imagine correspond to what in Bastar we call Parganas. There are, for example, the Belga, Jhiripani, Gumma, and Tumuribandh Muttas. Each of these has a headman who is called Patro. But this man, although most of the villagers in his jurisdiction are Kondhs, does not himself belong to the tribe. The head of the whole group of Muttas lives at Tumuribandh and is a Paik. The Patro of Gumma is another Paik, and at the other villages the Patros are Raj Gonds. This organization probably goes back a long while and the ancestors of these men may well have been appointed by the Gumsur Rajas.

All round us are stories of man-eating tigers. As we came up the hills yesterday, our party had to keep very close together while it passed through a strip of jungle that had witnessed forty deaths in two years. Blackburn himself has accounted for several of these man-eaters, and is very popular among the people on that account. Both Panos and Kondhs, however, are extremely timid, and none of them will join in a beat or do anything to help to track down their enemy.

The Kondhs in this area are, of course, the descendants of the people who were once notorious for human sacrifice. I do not think that Macpherson or Campbell ever actually penetrated into these hills, but the Kondhs here came under the regulations they made. In consideration of their abandonment of the Meriah sacrifices, they received sanads giving them the freedom of the country, permitting them to practise their axe-cultivation and excusing them from the payment of all taxes. This whole area, therefore, is unusually free. There is no Settlement; there are no revenue officials, and until very recently there were no forest officers. It is only in the last few years that the Orissa Government, to whom this area was transferred from Madras, feeling the need of forests, began a policy of reservation. Even now no legislation has been passed, and all that the Forest Department has been able to do is to demarcate certain areas to be reserved. It has allowed considerable tracts of territory for axe-cultivation, although in many places it seems to me that the divide-up of the country has been done rather carelessly. Great areas have been given to Panos and Paiks, while hill-sides consecrated in Kondh sentiment by centuries of use have been reserved. We heard a good deal about the exactions of a Sub-Inspector of Police in the area, who among other things had forced all the women of one village to come and

sit from morning till night in the Police Station, simply because their husbands refused to work for him free of charge.

During our talk this evening, I heard some betrothal dialogues that were new to me. The Kondhs say, 'There is a black goat in my house. I hear that in yours there is a she-goat. Will you give her for mine?' The Raj Gonds and the Panos use the flower-symbolism common in Bastar, but the Panos also say sometimes, 'We have no spoon in our house. Have you got one that you can give us so that we can cook our food?' If the betrothal proposals are acceptable, among the gifts to the bride's father are an axe and a bow and arrow.

The marriage ceremony of the Khuttia Kondhs, I was told, is extremely simple, resembling that of the Hill Marias. Haldi is used, for the Kondhs are great haldi-growers. But it is only put on the chest and stomach of the boy, not on the bride. It is the bride's youngest sister who anoints the bridegroom. There is no ceremony of going round the pole, and no pouring of water. There is simply a feast and dance in the bride's house and the presentation of gifts and money.

26 November.—We started off this morning for Susabata. After two miles' walk across country extensively 'jhumed' by Gaurs and Paiks, we came to the charming little village of Rajam. This village stands on a hill surrounded by steep mountains, nearly all of which have been cut for cultivation. I noticed many castor trees growing in the old clearings, and Blackburn tells me that this is a very common Kondh custom, which suggests that it might not be impossible to teach the Kondhs the principles of *taungia* cultivation.

The village itself was laid out in two rows. Every house in a row was joined to its neighbour with a fence going right round the village. In the middle, standing up impressively against the sky, was a forked pillar of sacrifice with buffalo horns placed on its points. This is the usual arrangement in a Kondh village. The stone of Tara Pinnu stands in front of three other stones which serve it as a protecting wall. Nearby is the forked pillar which recalls the old days when a human victim was tied to a pole of similar pattern. Several large stones represent a sacrificial hearth. There is usually one large flat stone which serves as a seat for the priest. On the point of the sacrificial pole are placed, not the actual horns of the last buffalo to be sacrificed (for the horns are removed and made into trumpets) but the inner bone. Against the sacrificial pillar a number of wooden poles are laid, each of these poles representing an animal that has been killed in the chase. Sometimes the buffalo's skull is placed here and in other villages I saw among various relics the tail of a barking-deer, sambhar-bones, a buffalo's hoof and other relics. There is generally a thick wooden bludgeon

kept here which is used to smash the head of any animal that is sacrificed to Tara Pinnu. She is the Earth Mother to whom in former days the Meriah sacrifices were offered. Near the forked pillar at Rajam was an elaborately carved post, four feet high, with lozenge decoration and red stripes. In other villages there are, in addition to this central pillar, pillars of sacrifice (but not forked pillars) at the east and west extremities of the village court. In Susabata there was an arrangement, similar to that which I have seen in Bastar, of two pillars with a cross-bar in which the head of a cow or bullock is fixed before it is killed.

At our approach to the village everyone fled to the forest or hid inside their houses, and it was not for about an hour, when the old Manjhi appeared, that the people ventured to gather round. They were then friendly and we were admitted into several of the houses. The Kondh house consists of a large central room with a verandah back and front, its two sides being joined to its neighbours. The whole interior of the Rajam houses (though sometimes elsewhere this applied only to the central room) was dug out to about two feet below the ordinary level. The verandah roof comes down to within three feet of the ground, and it was very difficult to enter the houses, though once we were inside we could stand in comfort. There are two doors to every building, the back door leading to a little kennel on the back verandah which is used by the women of the house during their periods. When a woman is in her period, no one else may use the back door and she herself may not enter the main building or any part of the central village enclosure. Her whole life is on the back verandah and in the back area of the village. In each of the houses I noted a forked pillar six to seven feet high occupying the place of honour. At Rajam these pillars were well-carved with figures of men and women and with conventional designs. Behind the pillar there was usually a broad platform supporting grainbins and on the other side of the house was the cooking-place. From the roof there hung the usual bewildering medley of bundles and utensils which are, for example, so characteristic of a Baiga home. At Rajam many of the houses had carved doors. The doors were usually made of three slabs of wood fixed together by iron nails bent over, and the pattern was carved on five narrow strips and nailed on to the door. In some cases carvings of men and women were made on the door itself.

We had lunch at Rajam, and after a time a number of Kondh women came to watch us eating. The women are distinguished by the large number of rings that they have in their ears, by a plaited string with a comb attached, keeping the hair in order, sometimes by a certain amount of rather pretty necklace-ware and by a very large number of unsightly brass bangles that go half-way up the arm. Married women and all women who have had a child

go with breasts uncovered, though the younger women now cover themselves with an ugly little apron (like a 'Mother Hubbard') at the approach of strangers.

Beyond Rajam we went through thick jungle across the hills to Susabata. As we approached the village, we came on extensive cultivation, much of it in the area that had been reserved. There was a magnificent crop of pulse covering two great hills. I noticed oil-seed drying on logs and little platforms, several spring-traps for hares and a large fall-trap for deer. In one clearing there were perforated pots in which a smouldering fire was placed by night to frighten away deer. The approach to the village was charming. A stream runs near by and a group of women were washing their clothes on a great rock in the evening light. The people knew Blackburn and evidently liked him, for we had a most friendly welcome and immediately decided to make our camp in the open hut which generally stands in the middle of the village court. Susabata was on the same general plan as Rajam; with two long rows of houses, seven to a row, and the usual stones for Tara Pinnu and the sacrificial pillar. It was difficult to get straw to put on our beds, for the Kondhs do not reap their crops in the ordinary way but only break off the grain at the top of each stalk. In our camp-hut the jaw-bones of three barking-deer were hanging. The people said that every year they hung these up so that they would remember how many they had killed. When the bones begin to 'look old and tired,' they take them and burn them at the entrance to the village. Similarly when a lot of poles, each representing a kill, have accumulated against the sacrificial pillar, they wait till they kill a deer and then use the wood to roast the liver and special tit-bits of the animal which they eat before Tara Pinnu.

Here I examined and bought a number of the characteristic Kondh tobacco-containers. These are bamboo tubes six to eight inches long, which are elaborately decorated with the help of the iron pin which every man keeps in his hair. A few of the tubes have stoppers, but the majority are open and are worn upright in the waist-band.

It was bitterly cold at night, and at about two in the morning there was a good deal of loud conversation when an old woman, whose husband had been killed by a tiger the previous year, had a dream. During the day a panther had killed one of the village goats and this creature came to the old lady in her dream and said that it would not kill again if it was offered a chicken.

27 November.—Early this morning the village Jani or priest went with the old woman and her daughter to the stream. He killed the chicken with an arrow (both the chicken and arrow were carried down by the girl), put some of the blood on the backs and feet of the two women and thus ensured their protection.

A number of people went off with their axes to their clearings (here called *guriya*); some had regular broad hoes with a socket, the blades standing at right angles to the shaft. Others took digging-sticks with the blade driven into the end of the shaft. I noticed several women going off with their axes to cut wood. Other people gathered outside the village to cook the remains of the goat that had been killed yesterday by the panther. They would not bring the uncooked animal inside. The goat was cooked, and the meat and skin was cut up into little bits and these were carefully counted and distributed to the villagers.

At about 2-30 in the afternoon the village goat-herd came running in, shouting that yet another goat had been killed by the panther. Blackburn at once went out and at about 3-45 he managed to shoot it. The Kondhs would not carry the panther back to camp—this was done by our Pano carriers—and when they tried to bring it inside the village, the people stopped them.<sup>1</sup> Blackburn offered the Kondhs the skin—it was a good medium panther 6'-1" long—but the Kondhs did not want it, and it was finally taken by his Mussalman bearer. In the evening we first had some talk with the elders about the *dhangra-itu* or village dormitory. One old man said that in his youth there were two boys' houses and one girl's house in the village, but at present there were very few unmarried boys and girls of the proper age, for the girls apparently do not sleep in the dormitory before puberty. The boys (here called *dhangra* or *ravinja*) sleep with an old man, and any girls there may be (the girls are *dhangri* or *raska*) stay in the house of the old widow-woman and her daughter. The boys and girls are given titles as in Bastar. There is a Manjhi-dhangra who is the head of the dormitory, and a Dolai, his assistant. A Jani arranges the wood supplies and gets everything needed for feasts and festivals; a Raut has to see to providing labour for the police and to the entertainment of visitors. Among the girls there is a Manjhi-arū and a Dolai-arū, but it is evident that in this village the dormitory system is not very much alive.

The wife's younger sister appears to hold a high place in Kondh family relationships. It is her duty to anoint the bridegroom with haldi at a marriage. One of the boys by the fire had many bangles on his right hand, but none on his left: he had given all of them to his wife's younger sister. Another boy said he had given all the bangles of both hands to the same relation.

During the afternoon three magnificent boys came from the neighbouring village of Sapur. One of them was a gorgeous-looking creature with long curls of hair and over-dressed just like

<sup>1</sup> Blackburn tells me—though this is a different point—that Gonds in Bindra Nawagarh refused to eat a sambhar which he had touched with his boots and which he had helped to carry.



a Jhoria Muria, with a mass of bead-necklaces, belts and hair-ornaments. The other two were also finely decorated, and I felt as though a group of Muria cheliks had suddenly walked into the village. One of them had three tobacco-tubes in his belt to show off. They had the long flap of their loin-cloth hanging down almost to their ankles, though the buttocks were entirely exposed. They were fairly (but not remarkably) handy with their bows and arrows; one hit a cigarette packet at thirteen paces. One of the boys was a Gharjawa; such a boy is kept when parents have no son or are specially devoted to a daughter; he will always live in the bride's house.

The women here have large quantities of white cord wound round and round their waists. Little girls wear nothing except this cord with a small cloth passed between the legs and tucked in at the back and front. Older women partly cover the cords with strips of dirty cloth. We were told that the aim of this belt was to keep the waist thin and slender, but probably it is a relic of the only form of dress known to the Kondhs in former times. The cord is made by women themselves out of the fibres of the *tudi* tree and is generally made during the rains.

Later in the evening, no doubt inspired by the three boys from Sapur, a number of girls appeared, rather prettily dressed in red clothes (which we were told were very old) and a dance began. Before the dance started, the Jani worshipped before the eastern sacrificial pole. He held up a leaf-cup of coals with incense burning on them and recited a number of mantras. The Kondh dance is of the simplest character. Boys and girls in two lines or groups shuffle up and down the village court and sing vigorously and very fast. It was taboo, they said, to beat a drum except at marriages and festivals. Later the formation of the dance changed, and they did one which was not unlike a Mandla Karma. A row of boys faced a row of girls and swung to and fro. Sometimes they joined their hands; sometimes they placed them round their neighbour's necks. The general confusion and vigour of the dance reminded me of Ghasia dances I have seen in Sarangarh. They sang a song which was rather different from those commonly printed<sup>1</sup> about the great gratitude of the Kondhs to those who stopped their human sacrifices.

<sup>1</sup> O'Malley, for example, writing in 1940, quotes Friend-Pereira's article 'Some Khond Songs' published in *J. A. S. Beng.* in 1899, to show that 'the Kondhs still sing songs expressing their gratitude to Sir John Campbell and Major Charters Macpherson (Modokella Saheb) for the era of peace which they inaugurated'.—L. S. S. O'Malley, *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 734. The use of the word *still* seems hardly justified. The myth of the Kondhs' gratitude seems to have grown up out of this single, and very slight, article by Friend-Pereira. I am not suggesting, of course, that the Kondhs ought not to be grateful: I only question whether they are so in fact.

Makmol came on an elephant and stopped our sacrifices;  
 Tohol came to put an end to the Meriah;  
 Batul destroyed the glory of our race.

But the sahibs who have come today are here only to  
 help us:

They go into our houses; they look at our tobacco;  
 They go into our houses; they look at our tobacco-tubes;  
 they give us medicine;

They love us; they do us no harm as Makmol did.

The sahib has killed the panther that was troubling us.

The sahib from Raipur with lots of money

Is sharing it with us.

They have come to see what we eat and how we live,

They have come to see our troubles.

Long ago there came sahibs and we gave them elephants  
 and horses

And all they did was to destroy our customs.

A great deal of this, of course, was mere flattery in the hope  
 that 'the sahib from Raipur with lots of money' really would  
 share it with the singers. But the references to the stopping of  
 the Meriah sacrifice were clearly regretful.

After a time they changed the theme and sang a song about  
 the gods.

We will sing a song of Linga Pinnu.

Linga Pinnu made the world,

Linga Pinnu made the people,

Linga Pinnu made the Kui,

Linga Pinnu made the Panos,

Linga Pinnu made the sahibs,

Linga Pinnu made the sambhar,

Linga Pinnu made the barking-deer,

Linga Pinnu made the cows,

Linga Pinnu made the roots,

Linga Pinnu taught us how to sing.

Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *tapka* (small drum),

Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *lisna* (big drum),

Linga Pinnu showed us how to blow the *mohori*,

Linga Pinnu taught us to cut *guriya* on the hillside,

Linga Pinnu taught us how to plant roots and pulses.

Linga Pinnu taught the unmarried boys to sleep in the

*dhangra-ilu*,

Linga Pinnu taught them how to dance and sing.

Linga Pinnu showed us how to do the Meriah sacrifice.

Linga Pinnu was born from the ground

From the ground between Gumma and Karanja;

He lived till he was old.

He taught us everything and died.  
 When he married he had children  
 We are all his offspring.  
 Linga Pinnu divided us by castes and clans.  
 Then we Kui said to one another,  
 'How shall we eat? How shall we live?'  
 Linga Pinnu took us to the jungle;  
 He taught us how to cut and burn.  
 For our crops he gave us seed.

I was not able to record the originals of these songs. They were translated for us, as they were sung, by a group of elders sitting round. I have no doubt, however, that they represent the gist of what was sung.

28 November.—The night was again a little disturbed, probably by the presence of the three fascinating boys from Sapur. I was woken in the middle of the night by a couple of girls going from their own dormitory to that of the boys.

Early in the morning I saw a Gunia curing an old woman's headache by sitting before her, holding his right hand to her forehead and singing in a beautiful sing-song rhythm. He finished by blowing gently into her ear, thus driving away the disease.

We had an affectionate farewell. I bought a number of tobacco tubes and a string-dress. Blackburn caused great amusement by putting this on. We left the village with regret, for it was very friendly and there were some of the most charming children, especially Lekura and Runno, that I have met in any primitive village. We went forward through a dense jungle to Sapur. After the exciting meeting with the three splendid boys, this village was a little disappointing. It was small and messy; there were no carvings and no sacrificial pillar. When we played the gramophone, the people gathered round in a very friendly way and a number of girls, who obviously belonged to the village dormitory, came to listen. I noticed a honey-comb hung up among the gourd vines. This was intended to promote their growth, the idea being that the hornets would come and by spreading pollen would promote the growth of the gourds. This struck me as a remarkably rationalistic explanation.

We went on to lunch at Belgarh where there is a Police Station. This is very carefully barricaded, a thing at which I am not surprised in view of the devastation caused to the rice-crops by wild elephants only a few hundred yards away. I was told that recently an official had been there and had urged the Kondhs to come down from their highlands and do ordinary rice-cultivation in the neighbourhood of such places as Belgarh. This is the kind of thing that officials who have no knowledge of remote Districts often recommend. Every yard of rice-cultivation was trampled and destroyed by

elephants. I was told that the police hardly dared to move out of their Station House. When the Sub-Inspector goes out on his bicycle, he has four Kondhs running in front and four behind to protect him.

Here I visited a Pano village and very interesting it was. Here were two long lines of houses all joined together in Kondh fashion, but these stood high above the ground instead of being dug out below it. There was a great sacrificial stone and a large wooden pillar for the sacrificial buffalo in the middle of the village court. The Panos also have a back and a front door to their houses, and seem to live very largely like the Kondhs. Near the village I saw a place where a tiger had killed no fewer than six people.

We then went on through thick forests to Rungapara. I shall never forget my first view of this wonderful village. It lies on the slope of a hill and from a small elevation opposite it is possible to see its two great arms (each of thirty houses joined together) stretching up the hill-side in a great oval with two hills behind, their slopes cleared and with tufts of forest on their summit. The upper gate of the village had two great sacrificial poles, some 12 ft. high, on either side. There were three huts in the middle of the great courtyard in one of which hung the large taboo drum used for festivals. We camped in one of these. The houses were on the typical Kondh pattern dug out inside, but there was a double wall to the front verandahs. Formerly the front walls which were only 3 ft. high had been elaborately adorned, but the rains had spoiled the decorations. Rungapara was remarkable for the back court yards of the houses. All along the great line there was an arbour made of poles over which gourd vines were growing. The village fence was about 15 ft. away from the back of the houses and there was thus a pleasant enclosure where people could sit and talk and work. Outside the fence, all round the village, were small gardens in which tobacco and oil-seeds were grown. On one side and behind there was a small group of three houses for the Panos, but there was little except a weaver's loom to distinguish these houses from the rest. Here I noticed a big leaf-bundle tied up among the gourds to make them, by sympathetic magic, grow big, and a large earthen pot with the same purpose. Arrows were stuck in the roofs of a few houses, These were the arrows used to cut the cord of a child recently born there.

The village was beautifully clean and each morning and evening women and children swept the great court and carried out the rubbish.

Neither men nor women had very many ornaments, but the younger boys had a number of necklaces in the Muria style. Everyone was very friendly. The whole crowded village became amazingly quiet at night, and as it was much warmer than at Susabata we slept well.

29 November.—The people say that the whole of one side of the village is occupied by members of the Jani Clan, and is dominated by the Jani priest who has his house in the middle. The other side belongs to the Manjhi Clan and is similarly controlled by the central Manjhi's house. There are dormitories for boys and girls on both sides of the village. I saw three of the boys' dormitories, little rooms containing cots and various boyish possessions. The girls' dormitory was evident, for the unmarried girls sat on the verandah and watched us all day long. Both boys and girls here take as their dormitory title the name of the village into which they are going to marry.

We were told something about the Kondh method of axe-cultivation. They cultivate a clearing for three years, sowing pulse in the first year and the small millets and mandia in the other two years. They arrange their holdings in great strips for each family; these extend from the bottom to the top of the hill. The firing is done by the Jani with fire specially made by a drill in the forest. When the crop is ready, they bring a little of each grain and tie it to the sacrificial post in the village. Before thrashing they first take out a little grain with their hands, cook it and offer it to Tara Pinnu. If any old woman has no one to work for her, the villagers combine to help her. The Kondhs appear to sow one crop at a time and do not mix up their seeds in Baiga fashion. My impression was that they do not keep so many trees standing for their beans as the Paiks and Panos. They believe that the practice of axe-cultivation was taught them by Linga Pinnu. The hill near by, Pakara Parbat, 3007 ft., has been heavily cultivated.

Not far from the village I noticed an unusual method of storing grain on platforms down the bed of a stream in order to protect it from wild elephants.

I found and photographed a door very finely carved by a Pano with representations of tortoises, cattle, combs and human beings. There were carved pillars in most of the Kondh houses, and I saw one or two carved doors.

This village impresses me as alive. In spite of our presence, the people go about their business happily. You feel the stir and movement of an united vigorous community. The children played all round with little self-consciousness. One little girl was happy at the rice-husking game, using a bamboo stick for husker and dust for rice. Others sat delousing each other, and from time to time a baby would thump vigorously on the great drum.

I noticed that the Kondhs picked up the stumps of Blackburn's cigarettes and smoked them. They also had no hesitation in taking cooked food from our hands.

At about midday Needham and another man came over to say that the carrier taking our letters over to Bilamal had been killed

by a tiger on the way. It was largely the man's own fault, for the party with which he travelled, instead of starting when we sent them, delayed three or four hours for a feast of sambhar-flesh and they passed through the most dangerous part of the jungle at sunset. Everyone was excited by this news, especially as the same animal had attacked a Kondh woman the day before and it was decided to offer a buffalo tomorrow in order to check the tiger's activities.

All day we have been surrounded by the ubiquitous Panos. These people, who live in almost Kondh style but who are much more clever and business-like than the Kondhs, are quite literally parasites upon the tribe. The Kondhs dislike going to bazaars, so the Panos go for them and charge them three or four times the proper rates. When a Pano comes to a Kondh village, he expects to be fed by the Kondhs free of charge, and he even helps himself to their tobacco. Today I saw a Kondh man and woman bringing in grain from the fields, and immediately a party of Panos came running through the village to get what they could. In Belgarh there are forty houses of idle Panos who do no real work, but support themselves on three or four Kondh villages—Gurlimaska, Rungapara, Patipadar and Karanjidongar. The Panos even divide up spheres of influence among the Kondhs. The people here tell us that the Panos give one rupee as loan and take in return fifty seers of grain, which at the bazaar rate is twenty-four seers to a rupee. Another exploiter of the Kondhs is the Patro who lives at Mutta headquarters and demands tribute from the Kondhs in his area. Moreover, tribal offences have to go to him and the fines usually make their way into his pocket.

In the evening the three Gunias of the village gathered in front of the stone of Tara Pinnu to decide what should be done about the buffalo-sacrifice the following day. The Gunias did their stuff with more vigour than any I have seen. The chief Gunia (whose father married a Lohar woman, but whose magical powers do not seem to have been thereby impaired) was a fine-looking fellow with a great mass of hair. He began by standing in front of the sacred stone with a winnowing fan and rice which he shook and rubbed with his hands, chanting rhythmically. Suddenly the god came upon him, and he fell to the ground and began jerking and throwing himself about with uncontrollable movements. After some time the two other Gunias joined him, and there was a scene of wild movement and strange crying and shouting. Blackburn, as the great hunter, was called again and again to sit down with the Gunias, and little piles of rice were put over and over in his hand and had to be counted to see whether the omens were good or not. I too was called in and got a heavy crack on the head when the Gunia banged his own head against mine with great force. Another Gunia threw his arm round me and later

climbed on my back. By now they had got hold of some iron fetters (which may have represented the fetters with which the old Meriah victim was formerly tied) and the chief Gunia scourged himself with these. He took burning coal into his mouth and breathed the smoke through his nostrils. A chicken was sacrificed and late at night the Gunias declared that the buffalo-sacrifice should take place the following morning out in a clearing in order to avoid any possible contagion from a menstruous woman.

The buffalo must be without blemish and was carefully examined by the Gunias. It must have erect horns. It should be male if possible, though a female may be used if necessary.

30 *November*.—In the morning I woke up with a very bad headache from the bang I got during the Gunia's divination. At about 10 o'clock the Gunias got to work again, and again called in Blackburn to help, but I kept out of the way. At one point of the ceremony the Gunia exclaimed, 'Give us a human victim and you will be able to kill five tigers'. Then the town-band came on parade. There was a large nangara drum made of the stock of a sago palm and covered with cow-hide, a small iron drum, a large tambourine of the chang pattern, flutes and cymbals. Boys marched up and down with these and played very well indeed. The whole village began to stir. A group of unmarried girls came out to dance.

Meanwhile in the clearing a group of men under the direction of one of the Gunias was preparing a sacrificial pillar and a booth around the usual stones representing the Earth Goddess. The booth, which was like a marriage-booth, was tied round with a string of mango leaves. The pillar was carved, washed and erected near the stones and then anointed with haldi.

When all the omens had been tested and a god was riding on the chief Gunia, he suddenly seized the buffalo which had been tethered in the centre of the village, and dragged it out towards the clearing. The band followed and the girls came dancing and the villagers, including the women and the children, streamed along behind. The Gunia went very fast, leaping in the air and jumping on the buffalo. It made a strange wild scene as they went through the desolate clearings on the hillside. When they reached the sacrificial pole, they tied the buffalo's horns to it explaining that everything must be done just as in the old days when they killed a human victim.

The Gunias continued to dance and gesticulate. The girls also danced and the Jani and the Gunias bathed and anointed themselves with haldi. When everything was ready, the Jani raised his axe (a *pharsa* battle-axe) and after making several passes over the buffalo struck it on the back of the neck. He gave two or three blows and then his son and another man came with their axes and struck it down to the ground. There followed an

indescribable scene ; all the leading men present rushed at the animal with their knives and cut pieces from it. They cut off bits of the raw flesh and danced with it hanging from their lips. Their faces and hands were smeared with blood. Someone took up the head and carried it in procession round and round the booth followed by the drummers, then went quickly back to the village and put it in the chief Gunia's house. A number of men went off with bits of flesh, possibly to bury them in their fields. This is the usual custom when a buffalo is sacrificed for the good of the crop, but I am not sure whether it was done now.

Later the carcass was carried back to the middle of the village, and there it was cut into pieces and distributed. The liver and certain other tit-bits were cooked in pots on the sacrificial hearth near the stone of the goddess. The band continued to go up and down and the boys and girls danced. The Jani appeared with a bit of raw flesh stuck on a stick and went round the village leading the dance. At sunset the buffalo's head was brought to the centre of the court and there broken up and distributed.

1 *December*.—Visited the village burial-place, though no Kondh would accompany us there. We had previously been told that the Kondhs buried all their dead. But here at least they have adopted the general Hindu custom of burning those that have died of disease. Saw an old pyre orientated east and west beneath a saja tree with the dead man's possessions piled beside it. The burial-ground was in another place, some distance away. Both grounds were on the far side of a stream, away from the village.

At about 10 o'clock we left Rungapara with the usual affectionate farewells. We had to pass through the danger-area, and it was like travelling in a convoy, for a number of people, men, women and children joined the party. Keeping very close together we passed the place where the poor runner was eaten three days ago.

2 *December*.—Visited a village about two miles away from our main camp, called Bikapanga. This was set in a little cup of the hills overlooking a charming stream, and was surrounded by plantain trees. I noticed fish-traps, and there were many small huts for the gods in the clearings near by. There were four forked poles in the middle of the village with a variety of sacrificial relics on the points. The houses were rather dirty and there was no carving. But every house had, as usual, a special pillar in the middle. On the hills above the monkeys began to cough, indicating that a panther was roaming round the village. The people said that here too one side of the village was for the Manjhi and one for the Jani Clan, and there were boys' and girls' dormitories.

3 *December*.—I was very pleased today when a carved door and a carved sacrificial post were brought for me from Rajam. The owners were quite willing to part with them for a good price



after they had made the necessary sacrifices to avert any possible danger. In the evening the people told us something of their memories of the Meriah sacrifice. The victim, they said, was demanded by the *bhum*, the earth; it could be either male or female and could be either a Kondh or a member of another tribe; the essential thing was that the victim must be bought. The Panos used to take money on a sort of contract to produce a victim; the sum was always twelve rupees. If the Pano could not find a suitable victim, he would offer his own son or daughter. The victim was usually bought young and was looked after very well in the village. When he got old enough to realise what was going to happen, he was fettered; but he was still allowed many privileges. He was given the best food and he could have any girl he wanted, 'even the Manjhi's wife.' When the time came for his sacrifice, he was tied with his face towards the pillar; his head was put through the forks and held down. At the time he was drunk with rice-beer and he was killed in the same way as the buffalo was killed at Rungapara. His head and the cord and the chain with which he was tethered were kept in a basket in the priest's house. A little of the flesh and blood was offered in every field. The bones were taken away by visitors and buried in the boundaries of their villages. The penis and testicles, the nose, the ears, the lips, the tongue and the liver were cooked on the sacrificial hearth and offered to the goddess, after which they were buried in the middle of the village.

4 December.—As we were coming down to Ambodala, for the most part through magnificent forest, noticed bamboo poles tied round a sal tree in Kadar fashion. The Kondhs climb up them to get parrots' eggs.

5 December.—Went down with Blackburn by goods train to Muniguda through very pretty country, hilly and well wooded. There was a magnificent view of Nimgiri between the hills. Found the carriers ready at Muniguda and we were able to start at 11 o'clock. We worked up-stream towards Nimgiri between splendid hills rising steeply. The Kondhs are said to have a very good eye for the alignment of roads, and certainly the path was quite comfortable throughout the day. Here the cultivation was on the hillsides in small individual patches wherever the Kondhs could find a place among the rocks.

The first Kondh village we reached was Munda, and this like all the villages of the Dongaria Kondhs presented a striking contrast to those of the Khuttias. The village was very tumble-down; there was no forked pole for sacrifice and the verandahs were raised in Pano fashion instead of being sunk below ground-level. Some of the walls were made of rough planks of rotting sago-palm wood. This village, like all in this area, had its god-house in a state of collapse and without a roof. The Kondhs are apparently going to

have an orgy of building this summer with many buffalo sacrifices. Sat on a verandah to rest and noticed the walls were decorated with red triangles alternately filled with blue-and-red spots. The door-frames were carved with a jagged line facing outward. There was a small sacrificial pole inside each house. In the middle of the village court there was a small menhir which the people said was for the Fire God, and a pole for Bhima. There was a separate *dhangri-ilu* with cots, rice-huskers and a small spindle with some freshly-spun yarn. Noted a wooden carved dancing-stick which the people would not part with.

The Dongaria boys are very attractive. They have their hair tied in a bun on the right side with a red cord. Some of them have many ornaments, but they have no tobacco-tubes and their wooden combs appear to have been bought from the bazaar. They have a long strip of coloured cloth which hangs down like a tail before and behind. Every Kondh here carries a large unsheathed knife at his waist. The cutting edge of the blade is its outward curve. Many of the men had Ghasia-made brass pipes, with small bamboo stems.

We went on to Tola-munda and found the villagers celebrating the death ceremonies of one of their number at the boundary. The Jani was a charming little man with a goatee beard. He had two dozen leaf-cups containing many different kinds of food, and was offering rice sprinkled with blood under a little booth. Some way off another group of people was cooking for the party. I noticed young unmarried girls helping the priest in his work.

We camped for the night at Suttanguni under a tamarind tree, as the Dongaria villages have no rest-houses for travellers. It was very cold, and there was a bitter wind coming down from the splendid hills rising to 3630 ft. all round. This village also was dilapidated. There was a broken temple with several round stones, an old sago palm drum put upside down and an old iron drum. There were two menhirs, one of which was for the Fire God. The children were very charming and everyone was friendly. I noticed a fine plantation of plantain trees over a neighbouring hill-side and there were many castor trees in the old clearings.

6 December.—The sun came very slowly over the hills and we were a little late in setting out. After two hours' pleasant walk beside a stream, we reached Donguni, a large, dirty, stinking, badly-built village, arranged with the houses joined together in two long rows. The god-house as usual was broken down. There was a menhir for Nim Raja Pinnu and a sacrificial post. A few houses had decorations of red drawings on the walls, and at one time might have looked very fine. There was a small Pano hamlet near by. The Kondhs here call themselves Porojas. From the village we got a fine view of Ningiri towering 4970 ft. into the sky.

I noticed a menhir erected near a cultivation-clearing where, I believe, sacrifice is made when the wood is first fired. Near the village was a circle of stones round one or two small stones, probably for Tara Pinnu, and a large slab of rock mounted on smaller stones before it. Under a mango tree was a circle of sacrificial posts, about two and a half feet high with clay twyers used in the plantain ripening pits. Here, as in all the Dongaria villages, there was a fine plantation of sago palms and up the sides of every hill plantain trees crowding each other along the streams.

The people were not very friendly and no one would help us to make camp. We made a sort of shed in the village court, but here even the children hid inside the houses.

The boys, and in some cases the girls, have brass pins sticking up from their ears. These are called *kute*. They have abandoned the famous sambhar-horn pins (*sipna*) and now use cheap aluminium pins from the bazaar.

In the afternoon I watched the process of ripening plantains. There was a large circle of pits under a mango tree. The green plantains were put into a pit covered with straw, plantain leaves and earth. In an adjoining pit fire was lit and the heat of this was taken through a clay tube into the other pit. The fire was fanned with a fan of leaves.

Here they call cloth *gonda* which is the word the Khuttias use for their string-dress. The women both here and in the Khuttia country will not eat pork.

Nim Raja very properly dominates the village. The evening light on the summit was most beautiful. A Kondh said that Nim Raja had given them the sago palm and the plantain. If a sago palm gave good juice for three years they would offer it a pig. The people of this village always offer their sacrifices first to Nim Raja and afterwards to the other gods. We were told that there were two girls' dormitories on one side of the village and a boys' dormitory on the other.

7 December.—After a cold and unpleasant night, for here too it was impossible to get straw since the Kondhs only break off the top grain leaving the stalks standing, we woke to find our beds wet with dew. Just after dawn two sambhar appeared on the opposite hill, and everyone came out to watch them. The children, who had been afraid the night before to come and listen to the gramophone, sat in long rows near us to see the deer.

Left at 9-30 and made our way up a heavily-wooded gorge which rose steeply to Dhaminpanga, a most beautiful village situated at about 3000 ft. on the top of a watershed and overlooking a magnificent view of the Kashipur and Karlapat Zamindaris of Kalahandi. A great mango grove suggested that this would be the ideal place for a summer camp. The people also were much

more friendly and there were two dear old men, the Manjhi and Jani who were very affable.

Yet this village too was in the most tumble-down condition, and it was astonishing to see the large number of strong and healthy youths who could have rebuilt the whole place in a fortnight. In fact the thing that struck me most about the Kondh country was the quite shocking waste of man-power and the utter indifference of the people to the elementary amenities of living. The god-house in the middle of the village was as usual dilapidated. On the side and top beams of the building I noticed women's breasts carved in pairs, three on each beam, exactly like the breasts carved on the beams in Juang dormitories. I think it is possible that this house is used both as a temple and as a sleeping-place for the young men. There was an old iron drum there as usual. A menhir and a sacrificial pole stood on one end of the village. Inside the square were a number of pits for ripening plantains. But I understand that most of this work of ripening is done by the Panos who purchase the green plantains from the Kondhs very cheaply, ripen them artificially, take them down to the bazaar and get a good price—another example of the way in which the Kondhs are exploited as a result of their idleness.

The unmarried boys here looked very attractive with their great buns of hair tied up on the right of their head, with pins in their ears, sometimes two of them, a sort of fan of pipes stuck in their hair and attractive ear-drops of shell cut up by themselves and decorated with coloured wool. Some of the boys had straight knives with sambhar-horn hilts. Others wore two or three neck-bands of the kind usually used by women in the C. P. All had nose-rings. The women were very shy and I had no chance of taking a photo.

After lunch we went along a path running across a very steep hill which had been cultivated. It was almost unbelievable that anybody could have sown crops at such an angle. Yet not only had the sowing been done but the old clearings had been richly planted with jack-fruit, castor-trees, plantains, sago palms and orange trees. There is certainly no real loss here, for useless jungle has been transformed into a most valuable fruit-bearing plantation. In most of the 'guard-houses' in the forest-clearings were wooden gongs, bits of wood two or three feet long, hollowed out with a slit six inches deep. The watchers beat these with two sticks, making a sharp penetrating noise that could be heard for miles.

We passed a little village called Kuchchili. Here was the only well-preserved god-house that I saw. Its walls were decorated with patterns similar to those in Khuttia houses—triangles in red and indigo, fantastic circles and crosses. There were breasts carved again on the beams, the usual stones for Tara Pinnu and a sacrificial

pillar. The menhir for Nim Raja stood outside the village. I noticed a scarecrow representing a tiger with its hair tied up to one side just as if it were a Kondh youth. There was a girls' dormitory, a pleasant little house standing behind the main buildings. It had rice-huskers, winnowing-fans and other signs of female occupation.

We went on through well-wooded valleys round the flank of Nimgiri to Ambdhoni. It would be hard to imagine a place more cut off from the outer world, surrounded by high hills and dense forests. Yet this village was more 'civilized' than others. The women were even wearing saris and the people were suspicious. They refused to dance because, as they said, what was the good of dancing unless it could be followed by the orgy of liberty which they would not be able to indulge if we were present? The village was dirty and smelly, and we camped outside under a mango tree by a little stream. We were able to get straw here and, in spite of the cold breezes coming off the top of Nimgiri, had a fairly good night.

8 *December*.—Started fairly early to climb Nimgiri, a feat which does not seem to have been often attempted. At first there was a very steep and difficult climb on to the first shoulder. After that there was no path at all and the mountain-side was most deceptive. Thick low grass hid a great many scattered boulders of kondhilite which made progress slow. We got to the top, however, at about 1 o'clock, and then had to force our way down over very rough ground until we came to a little path which led down to Tenda village which we reached at sunset. This village is exquisitely placed on the side of a hill with views of the hills and plain below. It has an excellent orange grove, the trees covered with golden fruit, and we camped there. The Kondhs farm out their orange trees to the Panos who take the fruit down to the bazaar for sale. Tenda was more or less on the same plan as other villages and also had a broken-down god-house in the middle of the court.

9 *December*.—Left Tenda early and made what I found a most exhausting descent, almost like climbing down a ladder, at least two thousand feet to the plain. Saw some conventional decorations on the walls of a Pano house at Kachchavali, a small Kondh village on the way. Reached Muniguda in time for the bazaar which was not, however, very interesting. A number of Kondh women sat huddled together selling turmeric. All round the bazaar outside there were Telugu traders intercepting the villagers in order to buy their goods below the standard rates. The bazaar was surrounded by a fence and there were bazaar officials at each entrance charging everyone who came in with goods to sell. The money-changers were charging one anna in the rupee. I noticed a cloth-shop selling 'Standard Cloth,' that was plainly marked Rs. 2-8-0 for Rs. 3-8-0, and the Kondhs were saying 'How cheap it is.'

## REVIEWS

VERRIER ELWIN, *Maria Murder and Suicide*. With a Foreword by W. V. Grigson (Oxford University Press Bombay, 1943), pp. xxix+259. Rs. 10.

THE subject matter of the book as appears on the dust cover, and on the title page, is indeed uncanny. But those who can get over the first reaction, are promised an illuminating account of Maria's pathology, woven in details by a master technician, characterised by deep humanity, fairness and sympathy for the aboriginal and his sentiments, emotions and lapses. Verrier Elwin does not need any introduction to Indian readers. His work has a larger appeal than that associated with anthropological work of the highest scientific significance. He has earned the confidence of the people he speaks of and he has taken his readers into confidence as well: that is how *The Baiga*, *The Agaria*, and other books by him, even his small pamphlets are found on the tables of discriminating readers. The present work, I take it, deals with a side issue and does not profess to be a planned investigation. Yet it has fully maintained the high standard, and critical interpretation already familiar to us in his well-known researches for which anthropologists feel deeply obliged to him.

The problem of crime and criminals in India has not been scientifically evaluated due, I should think, to lack of scientific training in the personnel engaged in handling them or their detection. A few monographs on crime and the criminals have been written but much of these are amateurish and dealt with from the administrative points of view rather than that of the criminal. A whole problem of the criminal tribes who number several millions, has been neglected, although they constitute the major menace to peace and order of the country side. Social and economic aspects of crime have been discussed by some but they do not fulfil the requirements of scientific observation and critical evaluation. Besides, the experience of the writers has not been such that would remove doubts and misunderstandings in the minds of those who read the accounts or are expected to be guided by them.

Elwin's study of aboriginal crime is a new departure from orthodox treatment and as such will provide impetus to further specialised studies of crime and criminals in all ranks of society. The value of his treatment lies not so much in the comparative study he makes of crime in India and abroad, for I think he has profoundly been influenced by the Frazerian method which in anthropology today does not command sufficient prestige, but certainly in his purposive revaluation of the data from the Courts, which requires, on the face of it, courage and conviction. It is not very important if his findings agree with the decisions of the Courts of law, for such may be fortuitous. We have elsewhere pointed out, how tribal customs and usages are often at variance with complicated system of law and legal procedure obtained in British Courts and how the tribal people have to endure discomforts due to the fact that the judges and magistrates although they may be inspired to do justice cannot do so as they are not conversant with the dialects, customs and mentality of the people. Grigsons and Archers are not to be found in every administrative unit in the country and even then there is no guarantee that justice is always done or could be done.

What is of great sociological significance is the treatment of crime, as Elwin has given us, from the anthropological angle and here, I should think, Elwin has broken new ground. He has been involved in pitfalls. He has, for example, tried to distinguish the logical determination of crime from the system of sentiments, the totality of which characterizes the crime culture of the Marias or for the matter of that of any tribe or social group. The former is technically called the *eidōs*, the cognitive reasons of behaviour, the latter the *ethos* or the affective motivations of culture. The kinship code of the Marias regulates social relationships and aberrations, it illustrates the *eidōs* or the cognitive behaviour. For example fidelity and

chastity arise from the kinship bond and conviction and provide the stimulus to blissful domestic life, while most of Maria crime is determined by witchcraft, magic, alcohol, jealousy and the desire for revenge. It is difficult however, to prove that crime could be determined by the *ethos* alone, unless we get a comparative evaluation of the *ethoses* or affective motivations of different aboriginal tribes. The psychological approach to culture has not been very fruitful as for example the Freudian concept of *ambivalence* is difficult to substantiate in parents-in-law taboos or the Frazerian interpretation of the conceptional background of totemism does not fulfil the requirements of rigid inductivism, yet it is highly informative, introspective and the 'headline' sort of thing in cultural anthropology. Elwin, I should think, was led by his love for the people he has presented to us, in its *natural setting*, to interpret the psychic bent of his subjects that posed for an introspective click of the camera and that is why we find him characterising girls with particular forms of bust as susceptible to emotional outbursts or even to suicide.

The functional analysis of crime should provide a safer and surer basis for the evaluation of the incidence of crime in tribal life. For example, adultery is considered a crime of very serious magnitude in all tribes and it is provided against in the penal legislation of all modern countries. But the Marias would seek supernatural sanction for adultery and before a man starts the act, he would pray (p. 84), 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me,' and then he addresses his ancestors, (Ibid) 'Away with you go to water and to wind go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens.' This, I call it, a ritualized expression of an emotional state of desire and appears incredible unless we put it in a functional background. A functional approach to adultery would reveal not only what has been revealed in the prayers but also the interrelations of the various aspects of Maria life, the linkage of custom with custom, beliefs with usages and a wholish outlook which crime in aboriginal society ordinarily presupposes.

Elwin, though he does not admit in so many words, has, I feel, underestimated the influence of liquor on crime, for after all what is needed to rouse a docile and meek husband to a spell of frenzied temper is a catalytic agent and liquor fulfils its role in no uncertain way. These criticisms however, should not be taken as detracting from the merit of the work; they are simply meant to indicate the anthropological point of view which I am sure, Elwin will find easy to enunciate in his larger undertaking, which I am told is engaging his attention now, I mean, 'The Aboriginal Criminal in India.'

I cannot conclude this review without focussing attention to the suggestions outlined by Elwin, regarding the treatment of crime and criminals in aboriginal India. They are put forward by one who knows the aborigines well, and as such his suggestions require to be considered from a wider perspective. 'The life of the aboriginal,' writes Elwin, 'depends so entirely on certain stimulants to existence that without them he quickly loses the desire to live and even though he survives his sentence, he comes out of jail with his faith broken and his nature permanently twisted.' This is the case with all criminals and I do not think a special case needs to be made out for them. Suppose prohibition was introduced. Would this reduce the amount of violent crime? Elwin answers 'unlikely.' Why? Elwin says, 'Angry' resentful, the Marias would tend to cooperate less and less with the State in preserving law and order. Illicit distillation would begin everywhere. The brewing of rice-beer which can be done in the secret part of a house, would be very difficult to detect. An endless procession of short-term prisoners would come from Jando'par to infect the Maria area with criminal ideas picked up from other prisoners. Prohibition like other restrictive moves is a double-edged sword—it does not affect the aborigines but also the governments who harbour them. In some

of the native states with aboriginal population, 50 p.c. or more of the revenue of the State is derived from liquor, a fact which must cloud our thinking if nothing else. Rice beer was distilled in other parts by the aboriginal population. The introduction of excise shops, and the cheap liquor sold at them either for cash or kind, has made homebrewing uneconomic and the many rites and rituals connected with brewing of liquor have been permanently disintegrated. Prohibition is only a step towards rehabilitation of aboriginal mores unless, of course, we want that the primitive tribes should remain content in their ignorance.

Elwin does not think education can remove the causes of crime for the type of education available cannot eradicate these evils; on the other hand there is a chance of other forms of crime like blackmailing, impersonation and cheating appearing with education. Even University graduates, writes Elwin, and those holding responsible positions in Government service are equally affected with beliefs in magic and witchcraft, but Elwin would not think that the University education is no good and is no remedy for India's ills. The witchcraft act of 1735 is not a dead letter in England and even in the month of March 1944, four persons were tried at the Old Bailey for offences under this act.

Dr Elwin also wants a special prison for the aboriginals to which 'all those with say sentences of more than seven years should be sent from any part of India. It should be situated among the hills and run more as a camp than an ordinary prison.' I agree with him but the difficulties of giving effects to this proposal are great. Those who know the aboriginals, many will agree with me that such segregation would be a doubtful expedient. Tribes differ in their ethos, in their patterns of culture. There is not one aboriginal culture in India or in any part of the world, neither is there one 'tribal religion.' If the state is to provide for religious preachings in the jails or before execution of the aboriginals as Elwin recommends, providing an emotional outlet that the European prisoner gets from singing hymns in Sunday Chapel, the difficulties could be better imagined than described. Even then I should go in for an experiment, for it is worth it. But Dr Elwin's suggestion for allowing the prisoner in Bastar State, before execution to visit the temple of Dhanteswari would not probably satisfy the emotional needs of the aboriginal Maria, much though the Dassera festival might be wistfully looked forward to by the aboriginal elements of the Bastar State.

Here as elsewhere Elwin shows his deep sympathy for the aboriginals and as such his solutions are likely to transcend science as is just natural for an anthropologist if he means the welfare of his people. To sum up, Elwin's contribution to the literature of crime culture is solid and substantial. I heartily recommend the book to all those who are interested in aboriginal culture in general and to crime culture in particular.

D. N. MAJUMDAR



## NOTES AND QUERIES

IN the middle of the last century there appeared in London a periodical called *Notes and Queries* which described itself as 'A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc.' It took as its motto a saying of Captain Cuttle—'When found, make a note of.'

Later, similar journals were started in India. R. C. Temple was responsible for *Panjab Notes and Queries* and in 1891 W. Crooke issued from Mirzapur the first of the monthly numbers of *North Indian Notes and Queries* 'devoted to the systematic collection of authentic notes and scraps of information regarding the country and the people.' *The Indian Antiquary* also had for a time a 'Notes and Queries' section, so did *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*.

These journals assembled a great deal of information; much of it was used later in the ethnographic survey. Their chief function, however, was in stimulating enquiry and in serving as a sort of 'Readers Digest' of anthropological notes and news from periodicals and papers all over India.

From the current number onwards *Man in India* will revive this old and useful custom. Its 'Notes and Queries' section should be something much more than a museum of curiosities. It should be an aid to collaboration between scholars; it should rouse curiosity and stimulate enquiry. There are many officials on tour, magistrates in their offices, anthropologists in the field and even the ordinary readers of newspapers who frequently come across ideas and events which are not sufficiently considerable to work into an article, but are well worth preserving. For such *Man in India* will provide a convenient means of record.

Original notes, queries, answers to queries, quotations from journals and newspapers for this section should be sent to Verrier Elwin, D. Sc. (Oxon), F.N.I., Patangarh P.O., Dindori Tahsil, Mandla District. Contributors are requested to type in double space on one side of the paper only, to give full and exact references and to follow carefully the suggestions 'To Contributors' published from time to time in *Man in India*.

### THE KONDHS OF ORISSA

DR J. P. SINGH writes in *The Social Service Quarterly* (Vol. xxx, p. 128):

FROM 1-9-43 to 12-9-43 I visited 16 villages, all around Rayagada. The impressions I gathered are as follows:

The hill tribes, mostly Kondhs, are being exploited generally by three classes of people, the Dombs, the Sundhis and the Komtis.

Every village has, besides the village Nayak a Barik who is invariably a Domb by caste. The Barik is maintained by the villagers yet he is the most mischievous of all. He acts as secret agent to the Komtis, the money-lenders. For example, when a cow gives birth to a calf he gives the information and a contract is at once made with the owner to supply milk every-

day at home at a price. All sorts of vegetables, cereals and other produce chiefly tobacco leaves are thus extorted by him from the aborigines. He induces people to frequent the nearest liquor shop which is generally owned by a Sundhi. The Kondhs have imbibed the habit of telling lies frequently from the Dombs. The lands around Rayagada are mostly in the possession of the Komtis (merchants) and the Sundhis (liquor-contractors).

#### HAIR-CLIPPINGS

LADY Montgomery, mother of General Montgomery, at Brixton yesterday, said that the last time her son was in London he went to get his hair cut. When it was finished there was a rush by customers and staff to collect the clippings.—*News Chronicle* (London, Sept. 1943). Compare Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (Abridged Edition, London, 1923), pp. 233 ff.

#### SECOND GUJARAT ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPEDITION

THE first investigation about the Bhils of the Panchamahals was conducted in December 1941, the results of which were published in the *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* for October 1942. A serious doubt was raised as to whether these Bhils were indigenous as the anthropometric measurements and blood group tests suggested a closer connection with the Indo-Aryan races. A second investigation was therefore conducted in December 1943 by Mr P. G. Shah again with the help of Dr D. N. Majumdar of the Anthropological Department of Lucknow University. He has extensive experience of such work and has himself handled 6,000 aboriginal people all over India, and was recently entrusted by the Government of India with a survey of the aboriginal tribes in the United Provinces. With the close co-operation of the Rajpipla State authorities, especially of Khan Bahadur P. D. Kothawalla the Diwan Saheb, the Chief Forest Officer, and the State Archaeologist, it was possible to measure and take blood group tests of 300 more Bhils and Dhanakas in the forest areas of the State. The specimens of the Bhils obtained in the Mal-Samot plateau of the Satpura hills did not prove to be as fair as reported but the results of the investigation after they are tabulated, scrutinised, and checked are expected to lead to important discoveries. A post-graduate student is being appointed as a scholar for the study of the aboriginal tribes of Gujarat, and the Society expects to make further progress in this branch of research.

*Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, Vol. vi, p. 1.

#### PARDHAN IDEAS ABOUT THE TIGER

THE Pardhans of South-east Mandla have many traditions about the tiger. The tiger hates man and fears him: when it wants to attack him, it applies its own urine to its eyes: this prevents it seeing the faces of men and their eyes, which have a hypnotic effect. Tiger's urine is used in magic: Mongri Pardhan applied a man-eater's urine to his eyes with the result that when he met any man who was fated to be eaten by a tiger, he saw him without a head and was able to warn him. Yet Mongri himself was killed by a tiger.

The Pardhans say (I believe quite incorrectly) that when a tiger kills a girl it first eats her eyes and her breasts, 'the two things that madden men.' When it kills a man, it first eats his penis and testes, 'for a man is proud of these.' 'After that it drinks the hot blood and then sits gloating over its prey, twirling its moustache and saying, "I've got you! I've got you!"'

The tiger is a Kshattri, a gentleman. It likes to be fair. It is careful to drop its victim's clothes and ornaments as it drags the body along, so that the relatives can find the bones and give them honourable burial. It is *panchmukha*, five-mouthed, for it eats with its four paws as well as with its mouth.

If a tiger catches a monkey, it is certain to go on to be a man-eater. The jackal is its Kotwar: when the tiger is hungry it pricks the jackal with its goad—its tail—and the jackal cries *Feh Feh!*

SHAMRAO AND KUSUM HIVALE

#### WORMS IN A WOUND

W. KOPPERS in his article 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils' (*Antropos*, Vol. xxxv/xxxvi, p. 312) refers to my statement in *The Baiga* (p. 362) that it is Bhagavan whosend worms into a wound, and quotes Russell and Hiralal's assertion that it is Bura Deo who does so (R. V. Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, Vol. iii, p. 103). This, says Koppers, 'fits in better.' I do not think that whether a thing 'fits in' or not can be an ultimate test of truth, but there is, of course, an enormous diversity of opinion among tribal theologians. It must never be forgotten that tribal theology depends not on standardized creeds or formulated tradition, but on the living voices of the gods speaking through the magicians. I have just consulted the chief Pardhan magician of Patangarh. He says that when people say that Bhagavan has sent worms in a wound, all they mean is that he has permitted some lesser god or spirit to do so. He scoffed at the idea that Bura Deo would do such a thing: Bura Deo is one of the protective deities and never causes trouble. But this is disputed by Gond and Baiga theologians in villages only a few miles distant. Certainly I have constantly found the calamity of an infected wound attributed to Bhagavan and connected with the belief that after death he will punish the wicked in a tank full of worms. It would be interesting to know what views are held on his subject in other parts of India.

V. E.

#### THE MARITAL STABILITY OF THE ABORIGINALS

In the study of any social problem about a people in transition like the tribes in India, two things are of paramount importance. One is tribal convention and the other is topical environment. Any judgment of the sex-life and marital stability of the tribes requires a detailed and practical knowledge not only of statistical facts but also of the reactions that take place when anything beyond the normal rule happens or when any new idea is introduced among the tribal people. It is no doubt difficult to put down these processes of life in an ultra-logical form on paper. Yet the greater the knowledge of the people, and the wider the insight into their every-day affairs, the more convincing becomes the study and truth comes with it. Family structure and tribal organisation still balance well in the aboriginal world and this partly makes up for the frequency of divorce and other 'immoral' habits of the people. A woman may marry any number of times; so may a man. Yet the children suffer little. No child is looked down upon for the precedents of its birth. No child is an orphan. Tribal organization will not allow a man to turn out his brother's child or disregard his sister's children. The cross-cousin marriage and the close living of relatives create the closest bonds between people and save a family from degradation whatever the sex-adventures of certain individuals may be.

The Baigas may be 'immoral.' But they are 'immoral' because they are a decadent tribe. They are 'immoral' because the neighbouring Gonds are 'immoral.' The Pardhans are 'immoral.' The Pankas are 'immoral' and the Ahirs are 'immoral' also. If an impartial investigation of sexual lapses is made in the Baiga neighbourhood, the percentage and liability to a free sex life will be about the same in all the tribes and castes mentioned above.

Sex-morality among the tribes, as with us, has only a relative value. The sex-pattern of the Baigas may disgust a prudish moralist. Yet one thing is certain. This 'immorality' also has its limits. These limits are an index to the moral standard of the people set by themselves and not imposed on them directly or indirectly by any outsider. The rules of these limits are common to all tribes north of the Kistna. They are seldom transgressed. They are :—

- (1) A woman must not have sex-relations with her husband's elder brother.
- (2) A man cannot even talk to his wife's elder sister or mother.
- (3) Cousins who cannot marry according to tribal conventions also have to observe strict sex taboos.

I would like to draw the reader's attention to one fact, that in spite of all the moral lapses of the Baigas, it is not uncommon to see many an old couple living happily together in a large family of children and grandchildren. They have been good companions for decades. Among the Kamars, an even wilder and more isolated tribe, I found many, many such old and happy pairs. Again among the Maria Gonds in the Godavari district, I found that the sexual morality not only of married women but also of virgins was high. The Marias do not allow married women to take part in mixed dancing. So also, an unmarried girl in mixed dancing, can choose only a marriageable cousin as her partner. The wildest and the most isolated of the C. P. tribes, the Bhunjias, are even more strict. Women belonging to different septs cannot touch each other, much less a man, who cannot come under the marriageable relationship. Courtship is allowed but only with cousins. Among the Bhunjias, the changing of the marriage-partner is not common. A woman is usually a faithful wife. Among the Bhariyas of Chindwara fifty family genealogies studied carefully by me showed that marriages are satisfactorily stable. Dr Ghurye has stated that 'surely the marriage tie in all classes of Hindu Society is much more stable than among the Baiga and similar tribalists.' But this is open to criticism for want of statistical and theoretical verification. It is only a general assumption. The marriage tie in Hindu Society as in all civilised societies of the world has attained stability, perhaps because there is the ill-famed institution of prostitution flourishing at the back door. The aborigines do not own such moral dust-yards.

DURGA BHAGWAT

#### A JESUIT VIEW OF THE SAME SUBJECT

IN FATHER GEORGE TYRRELL's *The Faith of the Millions*, published in 1901, a book bearing the Imprimatur of the Church and the Nil Obstat of the Society of Jesus, occurs the following remarkable passage (p. 266), which we reproduce for its historical interest—

'As for the corrupt lives of savages, if it proves their religion to be non-ethical, what should we have to think of Christianity? We cry out in horror against cannibalism as the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness, but except so far as it involves murder, it is hard to find in it more than a violation of our own convention, while a mystical mind might find more to say for it than for cremation. Certainly it is not so bad as slander and backbiting. Human sacrifice offered to the Lord of life and death at His own behest, is something that did not seem wicked and inconceivable to Abraham. Head-hunting is not a pretty game; nor is scalping and mutilation the most generous treatment of a fallen foe; yet war has seen worse things done by those who professed an ethical religion.'

V. E.

#### POLYGAMY AND THE WAR EFFORT

'THE Maharaja of Manipur recently announced, on the advice of his pandits, his intention of marrying a third wife as an antidotal measure against his

bad stars' which had brought an invasion of his state by the Japanese—*The Times of India*, 3 April 1944. It would be useful to know of other examples of polygamy being regarded as a means of curing bad luck (other than the obvious bad luck of childlessness.)

The attitude of modern India towards polygamy receives interesting illustration from a cartoon by the well-known artist Shankar which appeared in *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April, 1944, and which we reproduce below.

## MANIPUR'S SECRET WEAPON



—Copyright.

The Manipur Ruler recently announced his intention of marrying a third wife as an 'antidotal' measure against his bad stars.

# MAN IN INDIA

---

Vol. XXIV ]

June 1944

[ No. 2

---

## COMMENT

THE publication of Mr W. V. Grigson's *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Government Printing, Nagpur, 1944) is the most important event in Indian aboriginal history for the past ten years. This Report, wise, thorough, inspired by such intelligent and practical affection for the underdog, will be reviewed in detail in the next issue of this Journal. All I can do here is to announce and acclaim its appearance and to commend its immediate study to all interested in aboriginal administration in semi-civilized areas similar to the Central Provinces. Mr Grigson's book should finally dispose of the silly charge against anthropologists that they wish to keep people backward. There are twenty-five million aboriginals in India. At least twenty million of these are in the economic and social condition described by Mr Grigson, and require the urgent assistance of their well-wishers to fit them for civilization. What certain anthropologists—myself among them—have urged is that the very isolated and backward tribes, at the most five million in number, should be given special temporary protection, partly because it is more sensible to deal first with the problem of the twenty million, and indeed of the four hundred million, first, and partly because an artificial acculturation is likely to do the wilder peoples irreparable harm. But for the people of the Central Provinces I am in entire accord with Mr Grigson. To give our readers a taste of the quality of his book I propose now to quote its concluding paragraphs.

‘The aboriginal must be fitted to hold his own against the rapid growth of modern civilization and

to make his own contribution to the life of India and the world. William Morris long ago asked, "What remedy can there be for the blunders of civilization but further civilization?" Limited isolation, in the sense of not opening up the most backward areas too rapidly by communications and other means, has only been proposed where the tribal communities are so backward that they would be bound to go to the wall if immediately exposed to the full blast of modern conditions. When all is said and done, it is almost impossible to find any out-and-out isolationists, and the controversy is somewhat sterile. Mr Elwin himself, who has been attacked as an isolationist, has really summarized all that there is to be said on the question in the last sentence of his article on "The Problem of Culture-Contact" in *The Social Service Quarterly* (Bombay) for April 1942, where he implores his friends "on the other side of the house in this debate" to cease "tilting at non-existent isolationists" and "to consider with all the care and application of which they are capable how the great problem of culture-contact and culture-change can be tackled so that in this delicate and dangerous process the least possible injury is done to some of the best and finest and most lovable people in India." The faith in which this Report has been written is summarized in a quotation (from J. H. Hutton) that "It is not beyond the power of India's primitive tribes, if properly treated, to stand on their own feet, control their affairs, and contribute their own quota of original and individual genius to the national life of India." Such a programme is eminently practical, and perhaps different only in degree from that set before themselves by the pioneers of the labour movement in England. The aborigines will in time throw up their own leaders, and one of them may in his old age be able to say, as was said in 1923 by an English labour leader (G. N. Barnes) looking back upon a lifetime in the service of the labour movement—

"I have seen many lands, but none so good as my own. I have mixed with many peoples but found none with so large a measure of fellow-feeling or sense of fair play.

And finally, I have seen freedom broadening down to the class in which I was born and which I have tried to serve. When I was young working folk were uneducated and unenfranchized. They were poor and dependent, and their working days were bounded by age and want, without concern by the State which their labour had enriched. Now they have at least a modicum of education, they are politically as well as industrially organized, and although there is still unemployment and, in too many instances, fear of want, yet these grim problems are being tackled with greater knowledge and more humane feeling than ever before. I take the present signs and tokens as indication of better things to be."

V. E.



# FESTIVAL SONGS

## *The Uraon Karam*

THIS is the autumn festival of the Uraons and is intended to aid the ripening of the paddy. The Karam Raja is the *Karam* tree which is taken and set up in the villages. Oil and scarlet are put on the branches and at the end of the festival the branches are thrown in a stream. For an account of the festival, see *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 43 and S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 240-247.<sup>1</sup>

### I

Raja, you made an *akhra* at a far-off place  
And planted the *Karam* in the middle of the village  
They have taken the *Karam* to a distant place  
Your *akhra* is deserted.

### II

The *Karam* is coming  
Shaking its branches  
Shaking shaking  
Shaking shaking  
Mother it comes  
To ask for the oil  
To ask for the scarlet  
To ask for the oil  
To ask for the scarlet.

### III

Below the *Karam* the girl sits  
She tends the *Karam*  
She tends the *Karam*  
Of mud is the drum  
Of copper are the cymbals  
Listen my mother  
Listen my father.

### IV

*Karam Karam O Karam* Raja  
For you *O Karam* is a royal umbrella  
Give us *O Karam* rice and riches  
Give us *O Karam* sweets and cattle  
For you *O Karam* is a royal umbrella.

### V

The *Karam* is going  
The *Karam* is going

---

<sup>1</sup> Collected in Ranchi District, Chota Nagpur. The originals are printed as Nos. 487, 475, 488, 489, 988, 457, 997, 990, 440, 992, 459, 514, 526 and 518 in F. Hahn, Dharamdas Lakra and W. G. Archer, *Lil Khora Khekhel* (Laheriasarai, 1940). Songs I-IV are from *The Blue Grove*.

The *Karam* is going to leave us now  
Give the oil  
Give the scarlet  
Bid goodbye to *Karam*  
The *Karam* is wanting  
Rice in the basket  
Money in the wall  
The *Karam* demands its toll.

## VI

Today came the *Karam*  
And was grand in the stream  
*Karam*, tomorrow you will go  
To the banks of the Ganges.

## VII

While you were here, *Karam*  
The boys and girls were full of joy  
Now you are going, *Karam*  
The boys and girls are sad.

## VIII

Yesterday you came, *Karam*  
Today you go  
To the banks of the Ganges you go  
Yesterday you came, *Karam*  
Today you go.

## IX

In the mother's country  
The *Karam* has come  
The house of the father-in-law  
Has gone far away.

## X

Come, *pahan's* wife  
The pot shines  
The scarlet flashes  
I have no oil  
I have no scarlet  
The pot is shining  
The scarlet flashes.

## XI

In the *Karam* days it does not rain  
Only a drizzle falls  
I have put the white dhoti in a box  
And the rain drizzles.

## XII

On the *Karam* day it does not rain  
The rain is the shining water  
The rain is the glittering water.

## XIII

Girl, in the *Karam* basket  
 Your baby boy is crying  
 Your baby boy is crying  
 The boy is his father  
 The girl is his mother  
 The baby boy is crying.

## XIV

Whose husband is coming  
 On the sides of the tank ?  
 It is my husband I say  
 My husband  
 No it is not your husband  
 It is not my husband  
 It is the *Karam* drunkard coming.

---

### *The Santal Sohrae*

The *Sohrae* is the harvest festival of the Santals and occurs in January when the paddy harvest is in. It includes the blessing and baiting of the cattle, a fishing expedition and a village hunt. Married daughters come home and during the seven days of the festival, there is general dancing and relaxation. 'The milk of the black cow' is the pot of rice beer which a married daughter brings home. <sup>1</sup>

## XV

Elder sister, elder sister  
 Go out, O elder sister  
 The festival like an elephant  
 Is coming near  
 You with a lota of water  
 I with a cup of water  
 Let us go and bring it in  
 The festival like an elephant  
 You with a plate and water  
 I with a long tailed cow  
 With the tail of that cow  
 We will fan and bring it in.

## XVI

Elder sister, elder sister  
 Go out, O elder sister  
 The festival like an elephant has come

---

<sup>1</sup> Collected in the Santal Parganas, Bihar. The originals are printed as Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20, 21, 22, 24, 51, 52, in G. G. Soren and W. G. Archer *Hor Seven* (Dumka, 1943).

How shall we welcome it  
How shall we receive it  
Sister, O elder sister  
How shall we bring it in ?  
With a glad heart  
And a sound of joy  
We shall open our hearts' door  
And take it to our hearts.

## XVII

Elder sister  
I will catch it by the hand  
I will pull it by the leg  
The festival like an elephant  
Is going away.

## XVIII

*Sohrae, sohrae*  
It was good while you were here  
It was different while you stayed  
Come again in time  
Joy, do not cry  
Joy, do not mourn  
On the due day come back.

## XIX

Uncle, at *Sohrae*  
Call us and invite us  
Uncle, we are yours  
Uncle, bring us leaves of lar  
And leaves of tamarind  
Uncle, we are many  
Brothers and sisters  
Put what you like in our hands  
But, uncle, we are yours.

## XX

Father,  
For twelve years is the festival  
For thirteen years, *Sohrae*  
It goes away and wanders back  
Lovely as gold, father  
Is the life of a man  
But it goes and never returns.

## XXI

Boy, take a stick in your hand  
Tie the cloth round your waist  
And go and bring your sister.

## XXII

Boy, you are walking in the village street  
You are strolling up and down  
To right and left of you are marigolds  
But do not take them in your eyes.

## XXIII

Sit down, stand up  
O friends, we have no food or drink  
But in the eyes' meeting there is pleasure.

## XXIV

A leaf cup for meat  
A bowl for rice beer  
You have invited  
Your daughters and sisters.

## XXV

Girl, while your mother and your father live  
Bring them the milk of the black cow  
When your mother is no more  
And your father dead  
Your heart will burn  
From heaven down to hell.

## XXVI

Wife, there is rice and curry  
Give it to our daughters and grand-daughters.

W. G. ARCHER

# NAG-PANCHAMI

BY MARY FULLER

THIS festival in honour of Nag, the deified representative of the serpent race, falls on the *panchami* (fifth day) of the light half of Shravan, the fifth month of the Hindu year. Another but lesser festival called Nag-puja (Nag-worship) comes on the light *panchami* of Margashirsh, the ninth month, and both are observed throughout Maha. For four evenings from the new moon of Shravan women and girls after their evening meal gather according to their castes in several centres, wherever a house has a courtyard or an open space in front of it large enough for the women of several families. Here they spend a long evening, until about midnight, singing the special songs of the festival.

On *panchami* morning pictures of Nag are drawn on the walls with coloured chalks, or, in Brahmin families, with sandalwood paste on a *path*, the broad, very low stool used for dining. An *ovi* says :—

At *Nag-panchami* with red sandalwood paste  
He draws Nag for us, my brother king.

Nag is drawn erect either as if standing on his tail, or after the conventional bas-reliefs in temples, in which the cobra is shown curving upwards in close lateral curves widening from the tail to the inflated hood. And since Shesh, or Shesh-narayan as he is often called, is said to have a thousand heads, these house drawings usually show Nag with five or ten heads and hoods, according to the skill of the family artist. Popular pictures of Shesh show him spaciouly coiled as the throne of Vishnu and shading the god with a canopy of the inflated hoods of his many heads. Now that cheap paper pictures suitable for various festivals are easily to be got, many city people, especially among the middle castes, put up such pictures of Nag.

Once Nag is drawn the *puja* begins. The picture and the wall around it are marked with turmeric and *kunku* pastes, flowers are offered, and small bundles of the sacred *durva* grass and of stalks of *aghada*, a very common plant; incense sticks are lighted, small bowls of milk or curds or *ghi*, or all three, are held near Nag's mouth or mouths, and he is offered *lahya*, popped *jwari*, as white and almost as pretty as flowers. The *lahya* may be dipped in the curds and stuck to the wall around Nag's picture. It does not stick well or long, but it is fun for the children. Other foods are offered, as the family pleases, but they must be boiled things. Nothing may be fried all day, or baked or parched. The *tava*, the concave iron pan on which the daily bread and many other things are made, must not be so much as put on the fire. *Modaks* and other steamed delicacies are made, and *puranpolis*, a feast-day

favourite, must be steamed and not *tava*-baked as usual. If these things are not made, Nag may be offered a little flour boiled in water, or dry wheat flour, and brown sugar. If any of the family are going to some snake hole to join in public *puja* these offerings are kept and taken there ; otherwise they are eaten by the children of the house.

Some people after offering steamed samples of good things to Nag put their *tavas* on the fire and bake or fry the rest of the things for themselves in the usual way. No vegetables or greens should be cut that day, and so people cut and get them ready the evening before. An *ovi* says :

At Nag-panchami cut not greens and vegetables,  
This day, friend, let us teach our hands mercy.

Besides the food Nag is offered 'clothing' and ornaments of cotton. A wisp of raw cotton is pulled into the shape of a tiny petticoat and marked with turmeric on one side and *kunku* on the other. This is the *vastra* or clothing. Another wisp of cotton is cleverly pulled and rolled into a short string of 'beads' and each bead alternately stained with turmeric and *kunku*. A five-ply cotton 'necklace' spun by hand is stained with turmeric, touched with sweet oil and put on Nag's neck by fastening it to the wall with nails. Such strings uniled and offered first to Nag are also worn for the festival by any one who pleases.

After the *puja* in the house the women and girls of the village go in groups according to their castes to some ant-hill near the village where snakes are known or supposed to live, and do *puja* there. The burning incense sticks are put near the openings of the ant-hill or even pointed down them for a moment to entice the snake to come out. The little bowls of milk are set ready, the popped *jwari* poured down the holes and sprinkled on top, and then the women and girls in their caste groups join hands and circle the ant-hill, singing and bowing towards it bending all together from the waist. They may sing only some simple rhymes in honour of Nag, as for example, the little couplet 'Let us first feed the child (Nag) and then worship the ant-hill.' Or they may sing *Chilaya Bal*, a long ballad telling how Shiva in the guise of a *gosavi* tested the virtue of Chilaya Bal's parents by demanding that they kill and cook for him this their only child, preparing a special dish of his brains, and that they do it all smiling and share the terrible meal. When it is ready Shiva restores the child to life, who then sits down with the rest to dine.

It sometimes happens that the snake remembering former celebrations does come out to drink the milk. 'A hundred years to Kag' (crow) says a proverb, 'but a thousand to Nag,' and even though neither creature lives to such an age, it would be nothing strange if after several festivals incense and singing began

to suggest milk to favoured snakes. In any case, it is considered very auspicious when a snake does appear: it seems a proof of the propitiation of the serpent race which is the object of the *puja*. The women, awed and even frightened but thrilled and pleased, withdraw from the ant-hill until the snake goes back into it.

## I

At Nag-panchami popped corn and flowers for Nag ;  
Then both our families in peace will dwell.

## II

At Nag-panchami we shall sing songs and wake all night,  
And so shall we keep both families in joy.

The two families are, of course, Nag's and the human family. After the *puja* at the ant-hill, the singing and circling, which they call dancing, and all of which may take half an hour or much less, the women leave in groups, taking their little dishes with them. If no snake has appeared the milk is poured down the openings of the ant-hill. Everyone now goes to some convenient place in or near the village or its river, an open place where there are stout trees. Here their men folk put up swings for them, according to their castes, and here they play the most of the day. Of course none but the little girls can stay all day—there is work waiting at home; but there is coming and going and plenty of fun. When there are older women to take care of things at home the younger ones and the girls, except those with strict mothers-in-law, have an hour or more at the play-ground. The bold ones swing two by two standing and 'pumping' themselves as high as they can; the others sit and are pushed by their friends.

Come, my friends, let us swing on the trees,  
Let us bump the sky with our feet !

While some swing, the rest play the whirling *phugadi*, the graceful *jhima*, and many other lively games with which go singing and simple dancing. There is always some shrill squabbling, especially over turns at the swings, but usually much more of singing and laughing, chattering and happy shrieking. Even the men of the village join in the fun, putting up their own swings at another play-ground, wrestling, dancing with sticks, and doing all sorts of stunts.

## I

At Nag-panchami they tie swings to the trees  
And swing and play, both men and women.

## II

In the Konkan is no such fun at Nag-panchami ;  
In the Desh (Deccan) they swing from the bitter *nimb*.

The thrifty hard-working people of the Konkan do not put up swings but otherwise they keep the feast pretty much as it is kept



in the Desh. In either part there are always families whose celebrations are perfunctory. Widows, of course, do not appear at the play-ground, but they may get some pleasure from a snake charmer's visit. Both of the Nag festivals are very profitable for the snake charmers, who go about all day taking in money by exhibiting their snakes for worship and feeding.

## I

Where is sounding the snake charmer's gourd ?  
At my neighbour's they are worshipping Nagoba.

## II

O Nagin Bai, where is gone thy Nagoba ?  
The snake charmer has taken him for his play.

## II

Where, friend, sounds the snake charmer's gourd ?  
There will I go and take my suckling.

This young mother cannot go to the play-ground and wants a little fun for herself and her baby. Nagobai is an honorific form like Vithoba and Khandoba, the *ba* being an abbreviation of the respectful *baba*.

Maratha women in particular keep Nag-panchami for their brothers' sake, that their brothers may be preserved from snake bite. Fond sisters may stop on any day to make *pradakshina* (devout circumambulation of an object with one's right side towards it and therefore sometimes called *uzvi-right*) round any ant-hill they happen to pass.

Going and coming I circle the wayside ant-hill :  
Keep my younger brother happy, O Nag Nath.

According to some *ovis* the celebration of Nag-panchami is not only a propitiation of the serpent family but a great spiritual benefit to the worshipper :

## I

At Nag-panchami place milk for Nag :  
By his favour thy intellect will become pure.

## II

At Nag-panchami for Nag the sweetness of sandalwood,  
For his worshippers the breaking of earthly bonds.

However, I do not think such ideas enter much into the popular celebrations. What is very popular, especially among Brahmins, is the telling of the Shravan *Kahanis* or stories, some of which are to be told only on certain days of the week. There are for example, four or five Monday stories, all in honour of Shiva, and there is a special one for Nag-panchami.

At Nag-panchami draw Nag on the stool,  
And now, grandmother, tell the tales to old and young.

The Nag-panchami story is about a little girl who while being entertained by Nagoba in his ant-hill inadvertently lopped the tail tips of the tiny new-born cobras, but who propitiated them by worship and so received 'boundless wealth.'

Nagoba is my father, Nagin is my mother ;  
And you my brothers Docktail and Loptail live in peace.

It is not only the children who love these tales : a good story teller has all the women of her family for audience and some of her neighbours too.

The songs for *phugadi* and *jhima*. are many, mostly thumping jingles with short lines, strong rhymes and often very little connected meaning, like some Mother Goose rhymes in English. The sound and swing are the chief thing and often, as in Mother Goose, nonsense words are concocted for the sake of rhyme. This makes translation difficult ; and, besides, the general inconsequence and jumbling makes most songs uninteresting in translation, and even unintelligible without much tedious explanation.

Here is a short one that shows how sense is governed by rhyme:

One-hand whirling	..	..	..	<i>phugadi</i> .
My <i>mama</i> is buying <i>saris</i>	..	..	..	<i>lugadi</i> .
In the <i>saris</i> no thread	..	..	..	<i>dora</i> .
My <i>mama</i> is fair	..	..	..	<i>gora</i> .
My <i>mami</i> is black	..	..	..	<i>kali</i> .
A chrysanthemum network	..	..	..	<i>zali</i> .

In these songs *mami*, a paternal uncle's wife, and very often unfriendly to one's mother, is a fair target for sport ; and so is *nanand* or *vanse* one's husband's sister, who being a daughter of one's husband's house, claims preference, and is jealous of favours shown to her brother's wife. When this hoity-toity person is at fault, it is balm and heart's ease to a nagged and snubbed little bride. Of course many sisters-in-law are fond friends but traditionally they are jealous of each other.

They brought a farthing worth of oil  
And mother-in-law smeared herself for her bath,  
Father-in-law oiled his caste-lock,  
Sister-in-law (*vanse*) oiled her plait,  
And the rest of the oil she set away.  
The cat came and tipped it over,  
The dog came and licked it up,  
Sister-in-law's foot fell in it,  
And like the Ganges a stream did flow.  
O Mother-in-law, a misdeed has been done !  
Mother-in-law brought a whip and laid it on.  
O sister-in-law, your house-keeping is wonderful !

Though, commonly, Indians do not like so much as to say the word *snake*, especially after dusk, and will then say *worm*, *insect*, or *rope*, or even, in some places, *bullock*, the name of Nag comes often in these play songs.

*Karali dhum ! Padval dhum !*  
*Karalis* a riot ! *Snake* gourds a riot !  
 On the snake gourd vine how place my foot, my foot ?  
 On the cobra's hood how light a lamp, a lamp ?  
 How shall I offer a handful of rice, of rice ?  
 How sew a bodice of only a span, a span ?  
 What shall I name my *mama's* new girl, new girl ?

Sometimes a song starts promisingly as this one,

*Jhiri-miri, jhiri-miri, soneri shela,*  
 Dazzle-dazzle, dazzle-dazzle, a gold-woven shawl,  
     A gold-woven shawl !  
 Over twelve towns leaped Ganoba's horse,  
     Ganoba's horse !

but soon turns to a boisterous jumble. Some songs are childishly vulgar, and a very few frankly immodest. Several in my collection make fun of a play-mate's husband. Here is a lively one with a thumping rhythm :

Play *phugadi* stamp-stamp,  
 Count rupees clank-clank !  
 O decent father's daughter,  
 My *phugadi* is watching.  
 My *phugadi* is blossoming !  
 My brothers are horse soldiers  
 My husband's sisters are landholders,  
 His brother's wives are gall-nuts !  
 Gram mash ! My *phugadi* cuts a dash !  
 Babul bark ! My red belt mark !  
 On my hearth are the *puja* vessels,  
 Radha's husband is the village clerk !  
 On my hearth is a lentil cake,  
 Radha's husband is an ape !  
 The flower-pot is blooming,  
 The yak's tail brush is waving,  
 The plait on my back like a Nagin is swaying . . . .  
 On my hearth is spiced pumpkin,  
 Saguna's husband is a wolf !

Another song ends as follows :

On my doorstep an arecanut,  
 Yamuna's husband is a beggar !  
 By my door a bean vine,  
 Yamuna's husband is a *Kolsunda* !

By my door an *aghada* plant,  
 Yamuna's husband is a dolt !  
 By my door a dog,  
 Yamuna's husband is a coward !  
 By my door a creeper,  
 Yamuna's husband is an oilpresser !  
*Phui, phui, phui !*

This *phui, phui, phui* comes in many songs, and many end with a series of extraordinary sounds called *pakva*. A *Kolsunda* is a small wild animal said to kill tigers by making water on its own tail and then spurting it into the tiger's eyes.

Little girls' songs, like many women's songs, are full of allusions to fine clothes and ornaments, to the husband's relations, and possessions of impossible grandeur. Lamps for example, are of gold, with wicks made of rubies. After the evening meal on Nag-panchami the women and girls gather again, for the 'all-night' singing. They start with play, and more *phugadi*, all singing at the tops of their voices, and when their delight is 'paid' (*i.e.*, paid in full, satisfied) they settle down to the long ballads of Chilaya Bal, Sai Rahi, Shev, Rahibai, Gauri, and the unfaithful Sonai. The last three I have heard of only in Berar. The first two are the only ones in which tragedy is retrieved: Rahibai dies of a cobra bite, Rahi, Shev, Gaure, and Sonai are all murdered. Every line is repeated by the company, after its chosen leaders, every episode sung in full, and the hours pass. After midnight the company begins to thin, and usually by two or three the singing is over and the singers disperse, too happily tired, let us hope, for tragic dreams.

# DIWALI PAINTING

BY W. G. ARCHER

AT the end of the Rains, when the cold weather is setting in, the Diwali festival occasions a brief burst of wall painting throughout the province of Bihar. Almost all the major Hindu castes participate in it and in almost all the districts certain forms are put up on the walls. The scale is largest in North and South Bihar and the custom dwindles as it moves to Chota Nagpur.

The forms may be grouped as follows :—

1. In their 'embryonic' stage, they consist of a pair of simple shapes—one on either side of the entrance to the house. The forms range from plain white discs about six inches in diameter to small panels containing 'notes' of the votive objects connected with the festival—the comb and the sheaf of paddy which act as emblems of the goddess Lakshmi. Occasionally little diagrams of men and women are added. At this stage the painting is only a religious act—to be compared with lighting a candle before a saint in a Catholic church; and only occasionally is it expanded by a caste sensibility into an act of *painting*.

2. In their next and slightly more extended stage, the panels become a dado. Two or three lines either of white commas, white dots, spotted discs or white hands are put on the walls about shoulder height and are carried along the blank surfaces in a direction vaguely parallel with the ground. It is as if a wavering ribbon has been tied round the house. This form is commonest in Manbhum.

3. But the efflorescence of the act is reached only in a further stage when the painting ceases to be a dado and springs over the entire wall. It then uses a fundamental plant-form—the *phul per* or *phuljar*—'the flowering tree' and sends it in a balancing formation round the house. This form is, as it were, a summary of all vegetation, an analysis of a type plant. A vertical line provides the trunk or stem and out of it springs a series of curving tentacles which end in sticky curls. This constitutes the 'type' but the variations are almost as numerous as the villages in which they are done. On the basis of two standard colours—a stale blood-red and an ashy white—the forms are red, white or partly white and partly red. In some the main stalk is red while white branches shoot from it. In others, the main stalk and the lower branches are red while the upper ones are white. Or again the branches consist of three sagging lines—the two outer ones white and the inner red—giving the effect of a tough resilient stem inside a soft and downy petal. Occasionally the shoots finish not in a curl but in a ball and if the ball is white, a red dot is put in its centre. Even in the structure of the type the variations are many. Sometimes the branches swing out in a firm stiff curve. Sometimes they are

lax and languid. Sometimes the tree is tall and tapering and the branches are small and short. Sometimes the tree is squat and the branches extend across the wall like enormous and extended arms. At other times, the curve becomes an angle and the branch a baseless triangle. Yet in all its forms, the fundamental idiom is the same. Like an alert skeleton, the tree, which is every tree, dominates the walls.

The explanation of these forms will be clear when we consider the nature of the festival. Diwali or the feast of lights is designed to honour Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Rooms, walls and doorways are cleaned to welcome her and each house is put on a new basis for a new year. Through the favour of the goddess, good luck will attend the household and the wealth and fortunes of the family will increase. The embryonic forms are designed primarily to protect the doors and to ward off evil spirits so that nothing may impede the goddess in her entry, and the wandering *dado* has the function of girdling the house with a barrier to stop all evil. Even the gaping hands which with their strangely emotive power reach back to paleolithic man<sup>1</sup>, merely reinforce this protective function. They imprint upon the house the marks of living men and act as sensitive guards.

This notion of a protective function is doubtless present in the flowering tree but protection is scarcely its sole explanation and for its main origin we must look to the ideas of renovation which underlie the feast. November when the festival occurs does not correspond with spring. It is rather a period of withering, the prelude to the cold weather. But the need to repair and smarten a house after the messy decay of the Rains gives it as it were a fictitious quality of spring. Nature may not sprout with new life until March but the house takes on a new life as soon as the Rains are over. To reinforce this state, images of sprouting trees are perfect emblems. They link the house to new and fundamental forms of life.

As the tiller has grown sugar cane  
And the cane has sprung at the root  
So may Chulhai Kuar's family and his cattle flourish.

To considerations such as these the forms owe their choice, but it is not merely as a vitalizing or protecting agent that the flowering tree is important. Its function is also to give a feeling of exhilaration, to electrify a house with the shock of beauty and

<sup>1</sup> Compare paintings of hands at Cabrerets, Les Eysies de Tayac, France. 'Ah, those HANDS! those silhouettes of hands, spread out and stencilled on an ochre background! Go and see them. I promise you the most intense emotion you have ever experienced. Eternal Man awaits you.' Ozenfant, *Foundations of Modern Art* (London 1931), p. x.

this it is which explains its style. The abstract curves which comprize the branches spring from the natural swing of the wrist and correspond to the rises and recoils which are fundamental to the human sensibility. At the same time they are elements in a wider pattern. In the phrase of William Blake, 'exuberance is beauty' and just as in a ballet individual forms may not be lovely yet their total result in ecstasy, the sense of exhilaration which these springing forms induce rises from their total sum. They achieve their beauty because they are not merely symbols but are sets of vital lines organized in a vital rhythm.

---

The Plate facing this page illustrates a *phuljar* or 'flowering tree' decoration (red on white) for Diwali on the outside wall of Puni Sahu's house at Rohika, Darbhanga District.







## A HONEY FESTIVAL

*TOP LEFT*  
BAIGA BRINGS IN THE TREES

*TOP RIGHT*  
DEWAR PREPARES GOURDS

*LEFT*  
MAKING THE BOOTH

*BELOW*  
PREPARING THE HONEY



# A HONEY FESTIVAL

BY VERRIER ELWIN

EVERY nine years the Baigas of south-eastern Mandla (and possibly elsewhere) celebrate the Ras-nawa or ceremonial eating of wild honey. I missed this festival in 1934 when I was writing *The Baiga* and so made no reference to it there. I had no other chance of witnessing it until the end of 1943 when, in the early morning of November 11 I went with Shamrao Hivale up a precipitous hill on to the wild and lonely plateau where an isolated colony of Baigas maintains in peace and freedom something of its old life at Pandpur.

The Baigas have a number of stories to account for this Honey Festival. At Pandpur itself we were told how, 'At the time of the creation of the world, Bhagavan had twelve different kinds of honey—*mohā ras*, *bhawar ras*, *kotiyāri ras*, *paremi ras*, *takhri ras*, *kanteli ras*, *tumeli ras*, *badai ras*, *chidamola ras*, *khadma ras*, *kodelida ras* and *kauhatmoha ras*. (As so often happens the Baigas could remember the names but could tell us nothing about them). Bhagavan made twelve rooms and shut up each kind of honey in a separate room. When the earth was ready, he opened the doors and let the honey out; it rolled away in a great stream across the world and soon there was nothing to be seen but bees—bees on the hills, bees on the rocks, bees on the trees, bees on the flowers. When Nanga Baiga saw this he was frightened and tried to drive the bees away, but they took no notice of him. He went to Bhagavan and told him what had happened. Bhagavan said to him, "You must worship these bees. Cook *baigāni kutki* in hollow bamboo tubes, mix it with honey, and give it to the bees to eat." Nanga Baiga did so and the bees flew away.'

This festival is connected with the *mohati* and *anhera* shrubs which only flower once every nine years. At Chiklapani the Baigas described how the trees came into being. 'There were three sisters—Raimari, Phulmari and Bijli Kaniya—daughters of Budha Nag. Lakshman was brought to serve as Lamsena for Bijli Kaniya. One day he carried off all three sisters, shutting them up in a big covered *jhāpi* basket. On the way he removed the lid and Bijli Kaniya escaped. Lakshman was very angry and he threw away Raimari and Phulmari with the basket. The two girls turned into trees, the *mohati* and *anhera* trees. But Bhagavan was angry and sent a swarm of bees to destroy them. The bees cut all the fruit and there were no seeds from which new trees could grow. That is why they flower only once in nine years.'

At Kapoti the Baigas did not know this version of the story. 'Bhagavan,' they said, 'gave the *mohati* and *anhera* flowers and fruit as the special food of bees. The two trees every ninth year

send their seeds far away from the danger of forest fires. The shoots spring up and the little trees grow slowly. In nine years they are mature and begin to menstruate and give juice; then the bees come in swarms for it.' At Pandpur they said, 'The two trees are girls, the bees are men. The bees suck out the juice, as a man brings out the *ras* of a girl, and the fruit appears on the branches. The two trees always flower and fruit together. In the year the trees flower, we call the *sukla* grass Sukla Rani. From below the roots ants come out and fly into the air where they turn into bees. This only happens in the flowering year.'

A third version of the origin of the festival comes from Kapoti. 'In the days of Nanga Baiga, when the trees flowered, the bees made a great deal of honey. Drops of it fell to the ground and ants came to eat it. Nanga Baiga saw this and dipped his finger in the honey to taste it. At once the bees turned into tigers and chased Nanga Baiga away. Nanga Baiga ran for his life and when he got to his house he found it was full of bees. He then had a dream from the bee-god. "Give *phulwāri* in our name every ninth year; offer honey in our name and then eat it, and we will trouble you no more."

'This in fact happened. But Nanga Baiga did not know that it was only the bees who were pleased with his offerings. In those days hornets used to make as much honey as bees. One day Nanga Baiga went to get honey from a hornets' nest and the hornets stung him. He was very angry and said, "I have made all the offerings and yet you betray me." From that day though the hornets make a nest, they get no honey. They go to the bees for it, but the bees drive them away.'

The festival, like many other festivals, is not only an expression of tribal delight in one of nature's gifts; it has a protective purpose and this must be carefully observed. 'If you eat honey before the festival,' said Bhagavan to Nanga Baiga, 'you will be eaten by a tiger.' In the year of the flowering of the trees,' said the Baigas of Chiklapani, 'there are always many deaths from tigers; for the trees are a token of the enmity of Bhagavan.' The festival is in the nature of a memory test. 'Bhagavan does not want the festival every year,' explained the Dewar (priest) of Pandpur. 'He wants it every ninth year to test us, to see if we will remember or not.'

The actual course of the ceremony was simple enough. On the previous night the Dewar examined his measuring-sticks to see where the honey was to be obtained. It was not necessary for him to observe chastity that night. Menstruating women, however, and their husbands have to avoid the festival and they are not even given the *ras-prasad*. If therefore the Dewar's wife happened to be in her period, the Dewar would be unable to conduct

the ceremony. In Pandpur there was no danger, as the old lady had passed her climacteric.

On the morning of the festival, the Dewar called four men and sent them to collect honey<sup>1</sup>; two were to go to the west and two to the south. The Dewar's wife prepared *kutki*, cleaning it and spreading it in the sun to dry. The Dewar had not been able to find any hollow bamboos, so he got some *turai* gourds and hollowed them instead.

The men returned from the jungle with baskets of honey in the comb and offered it to the Dewar. Other men came in laden with branches of the *mohati* and *anhera* shrubs and at once began to make the festal booth. *Mohati* is the wife and *anher* the husband; alternate branches of the two trees were placed in a long line, six branches of each. Four such lines were made and so arranged that the branches always alternated, and thirty-three small 'rooms' were thus made. The Dewar filled the hollow gourds with *kutki* and thrust them into a fire burning near the booth. While the grain was cooking, one of the assistants made a leaf-cup on each of the forty-eight branches by tying up some of the leaves. He threw water over the booth 'so that the gods can wash their faces,' for the five bee-gods—Kanteli Pat, Bhawar Pat, Kotiyar Pat, Khanwa Pat and Moharas Pat—are supposed to be occupying the booth.<sup>2</sup>

The *kutki* was now ready, and the Dewar mixed it with some of the honey and went into the booth, placing a little in each cup. He then went round again and this time removed a pinch of the *kutki* and honey from each cup and offered it to the adjoining

<sup>1</sup> Protection against bees while gathering honey can be gained in various ways. If a bear dies in the jungle, and you cut off a bit of the skin round its mouth, tie this to your waist and walk round the tree holding your breath, you will be safe. Or you may walk round the tree three times holding your breath and strike it with the back of your axe.

Among the Angami Nagas, immunity from stings is secured by abstinence from sexual intercourse and observing complete silence. J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 236. Among the Sema Nagas, 'chastity must be observed the night before taking a bees' nest and before the bee-takers leave their houses early in the morning to secure the nest, nothing whatever must be taken out of the house.' J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 72. The Kharias depend on the darkness of night; if they try to get honey by day, they cover themselves with green leaves. S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 103. The Chenchus appear to rely on divine protection and the assistance of a brother-in-law or son-in-law. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Hyderabad, 1943), pp. 65 f.

<sup>2</sup> At Kapoti they made the booth outside the village, for 'whatever you say at a festival comes true' and there was danger lest when the horse-play began someone might exclaim (finding honey all over her face), 'May a snake bite you!' or even worse, 'May you be impotent!'—and it would really happen.

'room' in the name of the Pat and of the bees. The result of this was 'to shut the bees into the booth'; henceforward they would confine themselves to enjoying the flowers and fruit of the two trees and would not sting human beings or turn into tigers and devour them.

Finally the *ras-prasad*, the distribution of the blessed honey was made amid scenes of great merriment and ribaldry. Boys covered their hands with honey and smeared them over the heads and faces of the girls 'so that there would be honey all over the world.' There was some liquor to drink; everyone ate a little of the delicious fresh honey, and the girls and boys began to dance. The moon was at the full and dancing continued throughout the night.

This pretty festival is valuable partly because of the simple natural pleasure it gives to the people and partly because it supports their morale. In dealing with bees and obtaining honey, courage and quiet confidence is of great value. After the festival, the Baigas lose most of their fear of bees; they have done their duty by them and they have a right to expect some return—honey and a freedom from stings.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I have not had opportunity to get the *mohati* and *anheru* shrubs properly identified, but Mr V. K. Maitland, I. F. S., tells me that they probably belong to the *strobilanthes* group, many of whose species flower and fruit gregariously at intervals of several years: when they do so, bees are attracted in large numbers. See R. S. Troup, *The Silviculture of Indian Trees* (Oxford, 1921), Vol. II, p. 694.

# A PIG FESTIVAL IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

BY DURGA BHAGWAT

ANIMAL-SACRIFICE formed an important feature of the old Brahmanic religion in India. The goat was the most common victim. Bull-sacrifice was by no means rare. Horse-sacrifice was a proof of sovereignty.

Animal-sacrifice still prevails in India, though not in the Brahmanic fold. It flourishes in aboriginal and agricultural populations supposed to belong to the lower strata of the Hindu community. It is strangely mixed up with the mysterious and bloody cult of Devi. The aboriginals, however, in many cases have kept their sacrifices detached from the Devi-cult.

How animal-sacrifice was transferred from the Brahmanic religion to the non-Brahmanic religion we do not know. We also do not know how all such bloody rites came to be detached from the Vedic religion and became the mainstay of the ghastly cult of the Shakti goddess. Some of these changes we can attribute to the influence of Buddhism and Jainism, but not all.

The non-Brahmanic religion, however, seems to have kept going on. Animal-sacrifice has been its mainstay. The goat and the fowl are very common victims.

As we shift to the aboriginal areas, we find that the pig is the favourite victim. Pig-sacrifice plainly indicates the non-Brahmanic heritage of the people who practise it. It is distributed widely over India.

In South India pig-sacrifice is very common. The Banthuk Savara kill pigs at their weddings. The professional thieves, Dandasi, sacrifice a pig and seven fowls to their goddess. The Domar sacrifice the pig. The Haddi sacrifice a pig in marriage; so do the Handijogi. The Hasala offer a pig to the dead. The Jogi kill pigs in marriage. The Jatapu offer pigs to the caste goddess. The Koyi offer a cow and a pig to their gods. The Konda Dora kill pigs in marriage. The Khond bury a pig with the dead. The Nanga Poroja sacrifice a pig to the Bhumi Deota. The Savara also sacrifice a pig to the dead in marriage and when the crops are not good.<sup>1</sup> In Coorg, the pig is sacrificed in honour of the dead and in the worship of Mariamma when an epidemic breaks out.<sup>2</sup>

In Assam also it is widely spread and for every little thing a pig is sacrificed.<sup>3</sup> The Ao Naga kill a pig when crops are growing. A pig is killed when a god or a dead person is seen in a dream and

<sup>1</sup> E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. I, p. 263; Vol. II, pp. 107, 186, 317, 323, 325, 494, 455; Vol. IV, pp. 61, 351, 374, 396; Vol. VI, pp. 215, 321.

<sup>2</sup> Ritcher, *The Manual of Coorg*, pp. 163, 170.

<sup>3</sup> T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 137.

also to the lesser spirits when a vow is made.<sup>1</sup> The Lhota Naga kill pigs when there is sickness in the home and in all social gennas.<sup>2</sup>

In Northern India a pig is offered to Banaspati Ma, the Mistress of the Wood, by every passer-by.<sup>3</sup>

The Ahir in Northern India observe the Sohrai festival which takes place on the fifteenth of Kartik when a cow is made to run or dance. Sometimes a young pig is made to squeak near her calf and the mother followed by the whole herd is made to pursue it and gore it to death.<sup>4</sup> The pig is killed by the Munda tribes.<sup>5</sup>

In the Punjab pig-sacrifice seems to be very rare.

In Maharashtra and Karnatak also it is almost extinct save in some few cases like a famine or drought when a Brahmin minister offers a sacrifice when 'two animals, a goat and a pig are killed, the latter over the body of the former and it is essential that no iron instrument be used in killing the animals. The animals are done to death by all the Brahmins headed by the Yajaman, pomeling them to death with their fists'<sup>6</sup>

It is to be remembered that in Assam, Bihar and Orissa, and South India (except when there is an epidemic, when the chariot of the goddess crushes the animal to death) the pig is decapitated. The methods followed in the Central Provinces will be duly discussed. The methods of pig-sacrifice however are not fully known and the information about them is scanty and scrappy and hence it is not possible for us to give here a full idea of the ethnic and geographic distribution of the custom. It seems, however, that it began with the aboriginals (the Assam aboriginals being one of the most important sections among whom pig-sacrifice is the most important sacrifice and most widely distributed) of various provinces in Eastern, Central and Southern India. In the North it does not seem to be popular.

Pig-sacrifice is also of paramount importance and widely distributed in Indonesia and Oceania.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas* (London, 1926), pp. 219, 220, 222.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), pp. 131, 138.

<sup>3</sup> W. Crooke, *Northern India*, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces of India and Oudh* (Calcutta, 1896), Vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, pp. 522, 227.

<sup>6</sup> J. Abbot, *The Keys of Power* (London, 1932), p. 216.

<sup>7</sup> R. H. Lowie, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (London, 1934), pp. 40, 41, 51. Also M. Mead, *Co-operation and Competition Among Primitive Peoples*. Section 5. The importance of the pig in ceremony. W. H. R. Rivers, *History of Melanesian Society*, (London, 1914), Vol. II, p. 210-5. Harrison, *Savage Civilization*, pp. 92, 110, 115.

## THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

The Gond are the chief tribe in the Central Provinces, and the cow-sacrifice seems to be a speciality of the Gond culture in the worship of Bara Deo.<sup>1</sup> It exists only among the tribes which belong to some class of Gond. The Kolarian tribes like the Baiga<sup>2</sup> and Korku, though they observe many a custom in common with the Gond, have kept themselves scrupulously aloof from cow or bullock-sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PIG-SACRIFICE

The next important sacrifice is the sacrifice of the pig, which is zealously sponsored by all aboriginals, and even lower caste Hindus, like the Ahir, Kosta and Panka.<sup>4</sup>

Pig-sacrifice is not employed in every social 'genna' in the Central Provinces as in the case of the Naga tribes of Assam, yet it is very important.

It forms part of the regular ritual as well as of the occasional worship of the aboriginals and is a communal as well as a family affair according to the purpose and the rite in which it is employed.

When it is a communal rite, it is performed by the Baiga of the village when the village gods are to be worshipped. The ceremony is just as is the case in the preliminary stage of the worship of Budha Deo or Bara Deo. The Baiga ascertains whether the god is willing to accept the offering or not and then making the animal eat some rice cuts its head. This forms part of the regular communal offerings which are annually made.

The occasional communal pig-sacrifice takes place when there is an epidemic in the village.<sup>5</sup> What I found in the Narbada valley and the central plateaus of the province was that four pigs are buried alive in four quarters of the village boundary. Only their heads are left above the ground and they are trampled by feet and killed. In some villages they are also buried completely so that no sound is heard. In Chanda, driving the chariot of the goddess and crushing the pigs and fowls to death is popular.

<sup>1</sup> Hislop, *Papers*, Appendix; W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, (Oxford, 1938), p. 49. *Godavari District Gazetteer*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The only case where a non-Gond tribe sacrifices a bullock is that of the Bhil in Khandesh. Bullocks are offered to Vaghach, Kunber and Hatipawa. *Khandesh District Gazetteer*, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> R. V. Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. I, p. 8. Vol. II, pp. 223-225; Vol. III, pp. 31, 466; Vol. IV, p. 310. *Saugor District Gazetteer*, p. 42; *Narsingpur District Gazetteer*, p. 54; Elwin, op. cit. pp. non ff. Grigson, op. cit. pp. 161 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Pig-burial among the Mochi, Parsi, Ahir, Lodha, Kori, from the United Provinces and the Central Provinces at the Yellandu Coal-field, in honour of Kali is described by Bishop Whitehead. When an epidemic bursts out a pig is buried in a pit. And another is buried at a distance of about a mile facing the first pig. H. Whitehead, *The Village Deities of South India*, (Madras, 1907), p. 184.



## PIG-SACRIFICE IN FAMILIES

Pig-sacrifice is, however, more frequent in family than in communal operations. Pig-sacrifice is regularly offered to the family gods (1) when the harvest festival takes place and (2) when the worship of Bara Deo is made once in three years.

It is occasional when there is disease or when there is death in the family.

## APPROXIMATE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

From what I saw in the Province, I found out that pig-sacrifice is not so frequent in the Vindhyan territory, Saugor and Damoh or in the Western portion of the Narbada valley, Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur. In Berar, pig-sacrifice is not popular and not very common. The goat seems to have replaced the pig and so has the fowl. A pig is sacrificed in the case of a vow made to Narayan Deo in illness and, when sowing begins, the seeds are smeared with the pig's blood or with the blood of a fowl. As we enter the areas where primitive culture is found in a concentrated form, pig-sacrifice also has become more common. In the south-eastern tracts of the Province pig-sacrifice is very common.

## VARIETIES OF PIG-SACRIFICE

There are two main varieties of pig-sacrifice, the Baiga way of sacrificing a pig and the Gond way of accomplishing it. The Baiga form of pig-sacrifice is typified in the Laru Kaj ceremony in honour of Narayan Deo, demon, identified with Bara Deo and the Sun God, the chief household deity of the aborigines in the eastern portion of the Central Provinces, where the Baiga are found in a large mass. Laru is the name of the sacred pig. When there is an illness in the house, a vow is made to Narayan Deo for the patient's recovery. When the patient recovers a pig's ears or tail is cut and it is fed for three years; the household prepares plenty of kodon and rice and gets a quantity of liquor. He invites friends and relations and on a Saturday <sup>2</sup> begins the Laru Kaj.

The details of the Laru Kaj, described by Elwin, are given in an abridged form adding my own bits of extra information wherever necessary.

1. The Laru Kaj is performed by the Samdhi (a male relation through marriage) of the sick person, called Kamri and three<sup>3</sup> Barua or temporary priests.

1 Elwin, op. cit. pp. 404.

2 I am told that the Laru Kaj can also be done on Tuesday.

3 The number of the Barua can also be five. The wife of the eldest Barua also plays an important part in the ceremony as I shall describe later on.

2. In the courtyard of the house a pit called Narada is made with some logs across its mouth and a small hole about a foot square and a foot deep is dug before the door in the courtyard of the house.

3. The Phulera, a bundle of *bel* leaves, is made by the sick person.

4. The most important stage which follows after the preparation of Narada and Phulera is the handling of the pig. 'The pig is caught and dragged squealing to the door. Once more rice is put before it and the Dewar cries, "Look, Maharaj, to-day we give you rice. Don't give us any trouble." Directly it eats even so much as a mouthful of rice, it is lifted up and its front legs are tied. A lighted lamp in an iron vessel is waved round the creature three times. Its mouth is forced open with two bamboo sticks and more rice is pushed into it. Boiling water is poured over its phallus and allowed to run into the hole in the ground before the door. Then three men, holding the pig by its two hind legs and buttocks, push the pig's head into the hole which is now half full of water. Earth from the sides is shovelled in so that no air can reach its nostrils. The squealing stops abruptly though the animal's struggles are redoubled. Then the men begin to bump it up and down in the hole. The bumping is most efficient to cause death, which is due to suffocation, and in about ten minutes the pig's struggles cease and it is carried out to be washed and singed. While this is going on, all the women present throw wet cow-dung and other refuse over the men and scream insults at them.' This is accompanied with abusive songs.

5. The pig is then washed and its hair singed off over a fire. Its body is dragged to the bigger pit and its blood allowed to fall in it. The grandfather and grandmother wrap up the head and the liver in 'bel' leaves and put the bundle in the swing and they sing :

Bring milk, O bring milk,  
 Bring milk of a surahi cow  
 Bring milk for washing feet  
 Bring oil, O bring oil  
 Wash the feet with oil  
 Wash the feet with milk.

I am also told that when the dead pig is decapitated, its head is kept in the leaf-bundle. Then its skin from the neck to the loins (this is called *badhari*) is also taken out and kept near the head. Then the rest of the skin of the hind part including the genitals is taken off. The heart and liver are then taken out, wrapped in *mahua* leaves and cooked first. Women are not allowed to partake of this food nor are outsiders given a portion of it. They can par-

take only of the rest of the flesh which is cooked separately. Elwin, however, says that the meat beneath the swing is distributed by the Kamri and an old woman, four scraps of meat and a share of rice for every household.

It is followed by a supper accompanied with songs mostly obscene and also a dance. This is according to Elwin the final stage of the ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

### THE KAJWAR CEREMONY

I learnt from my informants, however, that the head of the pig is cooked in the house next day if a male child is already born in the family. It is given only to the members of the household and the Samdhi. 'The head is given when a boy will be born in this house. Do not come any other time,' says the Barua to Narayan Deo. The head is thrown in the pit. The pit is then covered with mud. On it is made a small mud platform. The Baruas then go to the jungle and bring a huge thorn of the *narisay* tree. They pretend that they are riding the horse in the form of the thorn. They now are in search of the Baruin, who is supposed to be an elderly woman and who has helped them in feeding the pig on rice the previous day. The Baruin hides when the men find her, they neigh like horses and try to beat her. The women then attack the men who run and disperse. This rite is symbolic of the dispersion of Narayan Deo's army who was attacking the Baruin. Then the Baruas go to the river and throw the thorns into the water and bathe. Rice is cooked and placed in the Phulera. The Baruas take mouthfuls of the cooked rice and spit them over the house. And they sing,

O deer on the riverside  
With knotted horns,  
Hold the horns  
And dance.  
O Kajwar Baba  
Hold the horns  
And dance.

Then Baruas catch the Phulera, and run with it to the Narada in which they throw it. All the bones and remains of food and water are thrown in the pit. Then the Kamri puts the head of the pig on one side of the pit and says, 'Come again.'

The householder and his wife are made to sit near the platform on the sacrificial pit and are covered with a cloth. In an iron bowl called Karchul oil is poured. Three wicks are burnt in it. The Kamri then holds the lamp and approaches the couple followed by the Baruas. Then they sing and call out the names of all

<sup>1</sup> Elwin, Ibid.

important gods. Narayan Deo, Budha Deo, the Sun and the Moon, Banaspati Mata, Budhi Mata, Nanga Baiga, Nanga Baigin, and put the lamp upside down and pour water on it.

Then the Samdhi, who has taken a prominent part in all the operations pertaining to the Laru Kaj, comes to the door in the disguise of a Sadhu. 'I have come from the East, I go to the West.' The householder and his wife give him a winnowful of rice and pulses. Abusive songs are sung and the pig-sacrifice is ended.

#### THE GOSAI PUSAI OF THE GOND

Though the Gond staying in the Baiga neighbourhood follow the same method of pig-sacrifice in the name of Narayan Deo, in Drug I came across a different form adapted by the Gond, called Gosai Pusai. Gosai Pusai, done in the name of Narayan Deo is a prophylactic, disease-eradicating form of worship. Gosai Pusai is also done before the worship of Bara Deo every three years or sometimes as the Kothia in the Oundhi tract once in twelve years. Gosai Pusai is done in the month of Pus, and usually the dark half of the month or on the full moon of Baisakh. Any day except Monday is chosen for it.

Gosai means the 'lord.' The Gosai is Narayan Deo. When there is illness in the house a pig's tail is cut and it is let loose for three years. The Samdhi of the householder then takes a prominent part in the sacrifice and four more men who assist him, some of them being the sick man (in the case of a woman another man is chosen).

Women clean the house with cow-dung and then men make a pit on the threshold and also a Phulera of the leaves of mango, or bel, as in the case of the Baiga Laru Kaj.

#### THE CRUSHING CEREMONY

A pit is dug by the men inside the house over which planks are kept. The legs of the animal are then tied to four pegs in four directions with a rope. The pig is made to eat a little rice strewn on the planks and with an iron bar its neck is crushed and also testicles and the penis.

The head is then severed from the body and so are the genitals. The blood is allowed to fall in the pit. The Samdhi blows air into the genitals of the animal and all the men sing and dance.

The head is kept near the pit and the liver and heart are cooked by the officiating men and also eaten. The rest of the body is cooked and distributed to all. Some say women eat it. Some say they cannot.

Another meal then takes place, which concludes the ceremony.

The Maria Gond also adopt a similar method of tying the legs of the animal and crushing the testicles with stone, in which a pig is killed as in an ordinary offering. It is decapitated with an axe or its head is smashed with a huge wooden pestle or if it is a small pig it is whirled in the air and smashed down.<sup>1</sup>

Men cook the pig and some rice. Having finished the meal men and women throw mud and cow-dung at each other and sing abusive songs. Some songs are employed at various stages in pig-sacrifice.

During the Pahara or crushing ceremony, men sing:—

## I

The tree of bel  
The creeper of bel  
Loaded with fruit  
O son ! drink the milk of the bel fruit.  
O Gosaiya ! Wash feet with milk.  
The ' Khichari ' made of rice and urad pulse.  
Eat, O Gosaiya, eat.  
The twigs of the mango tree  
And a stump of saj  
Let it be your resort.

## II

On the full moon night of Baisakh,  
O dear, on the river side  
Dance and jump  
Hold the horns and dance.

## III

King Paramesar had five daughters  
The daughters played and jumped  
On the golden throne of Paramesar  
Paramesar asked the five daughters  
By whose fate do you eat ?  
(The first four said)  
We eat by your Karma <sup>2</sup> O father  
He asked princess Chango  
By whose Karma do you eat.  
By my Karma do I eat, O father !  
Paramesar sprang up,  
From his golden throne  
Shaking with anger.  
He ordered,  
Take princess Chango to the forest  
Let her live there.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Elwin, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Deeds in a past birth fate.

Twelve mountains were crossed  
 And on Sondhad mountain  
 She was taken.  
 She was asked to stay there  
 On the mountain a temple  
 Began to rise out of the ground.  
 A throne of gold also was visible.  
 The golden throne of Chango.  
 A big golden palace also came out.  
 City of Chango  
 Came into being.  
 Chango sat under the golden umbrella.  
 King Paramesar was crestfallen  
 He bowed down before her  
 Come, O child, to your old place  
 I shall not go to your place, O father.<sup>1</sup>

Women sing the following song when they clean the house with  
 cow-dung and make a square in which the sacrificial pit is dug :—

## IV

The Chowk is made  
 And polished with a pearl dye  
 O Gosaiya, be seated on your seat.  
 Be seated O earth,  
 Be seated O sky,  
 Be seated king Narayan  
 Let the four gods be seated.  
 Let the sun and moon be seated  
 The worship of Narayan is taking place  
 The sun and moon witness it  
 Where were you born O Barua ?  
 Where were you known ?  
 In the plantain grove  
 Was I born  
 And known in the abode of the gods.

The following song is sung by men when they dance and go  
 to bathe on the river, after the ceremony is over :—

## V

The Khichari dish of  
*Urad* and *Mung*  
 And the *pirapeti* snake  
 Eat O Gosaiya  
 On the Janaira<sup>2</sup> night  
 Mango leaves are cut  
 And also the pillar of Saj

<sup>1</sup> The story is exactly like the Marathi tale of Varnasathi

<sup>2</sup> The night on which the sacrifice is performed.

The scorpion bites the mother-in-law  
 And the mother-in-law shouts.  
 The pulp of brinjal  
 It is well bitten by the scorpion.<sup>1</sup>  
 What will you give  
 If the scorpion sting is removed ?  
 O Jataksing deer of Singaldip  
 Hold the horns  
 And dance on the banks of the Jumna.

The two kinds of sacrifices mentioned above are the most important ones. Whenever Narayan Deo is to be propitiated in Gosai Pusai, only the pig and no other animal is to be sacrificed. Another peculiarity of these sacrifices is that no blood of the victims is shed. But in other smaller sacrifices the details are not specific and even any other animal domesticated can be killed.

#### MINOR PIG-SACRIFICES

When the harvest is gathered and the new corn is eaten a pig is offered to the household gods in all the Gond regions. Sometimes a fowl is substituted for a pig. In this case the ritual is not elaborate. Here decapitation is the central item of the sacrifice and bloodshed is essential.

#### RAT MAI FESTIVAL

In Chhattisgarh, Rat Mai or Mother Night is worshipped in winter, in the dark fortnight of the month of Magh. Black lines of lamp soot are drawn on the inner walls of the house which represent the goddess. In Raipur however, I am told that a crude female figure of mud is made and covered with the soot. In Bilaspur a stick covered with black soot is planted on a platform in the interior of the house. The stick is the symbol of the goddess.

A pit is dug by the eldest married male member of the family who fasts the whole day before the symbol of Rat Mai and a lamp is burnt. He calls out the name of the goddess and sacrifices a cow or a black goat. The pig is preferred. He then takes out the heart and liver of the pig and cooks them separately. Only men can partake of this flesh. Women are not allowed to enter the room and cast even a glance at the light that is burning in the place. If they intrude, they may lose their eyesight. The rest of the flesh is cooked and rice also and that is given to all the members of the family. All the remains of the food and even the refuse is thrown in the pit in the room and buried.

#### CONCLUSION

As pork forms an important part of aboriginal diet, pig-sacrifice is more common than any other. From the different varieties

<sup>1</sup> The pulp of the brinjal is the vagina and scorpion is the penis.

of the sacrifices I came across in the Central Provinces, the household sacrifices seem to be more ancient and important than the communal ones. In the household sacrifices also the sacrifices in honour of Narayan Deo seem to be very old as the method of killing the animal without bloodshed, by suffocation or crushing, belongs to that stage of human civilization when implements like an axe or knife had not come into existence.<sup>1</sup>

The distinction between the Baiga and Gond method is striking. The absence of women in the principal rites of pig-sacrifice is essentially Gondi. The purpose of the Baiga and Gond sacrifice, however, is just the same, warding off disease. In the case of the harvest-ceremonies bloodshed symbolizes fertility.

---

<sup>1</sup> Elwin, *op. cit.* p. 24.



# THE LARU KAJ

BY SHAMRAO HIVALE

## I

### THE PIG IN TRIBAL CULTURE

ONE of the greatest of modern humorists has revealed to an amused world the attraction of the English aristocracy towards the pig. The humble Gonds and Pardhans are no less devoted to their animals than Lord Emsworth himself. Perhaps after liquor there is nothing they love more than the pig. They sacrifice it to many of their gods. It is the cheapest animal they can keep. Government has not yet put a tax on it. It does not have to be fed like the cow and goat. It needs hardly any room to live. It suffers from few diseases. It is the most efficient sweeper the poor man can afford to keep. So it is naturally the most popular animal in a Gond's household. Unfortunately, his Hindu or Mussalman neighbour looks down upon him <sup>1</sup> for keeping pigs, and this influence has been successful in banishing these useful animals from many villages. The Hindu banishes the pig and introduces the sweeper, replacing one untouchable by another.

But no 'reformer' will ever be able to banish this creature completely from the Indian countryside. The forefathers of the modern Gond and Pardhan always ate pork and sacrificed pigs to their cruel hungry gods. There are tribes like the Dewar who keep pigs as cowherds keep cattle. Many of them go up and down the country with these herds, selling them to the aboriginals. It is a strange sight to see the herds at night when the Dewars tie the pigs together with a long rope, just as the Lamana gypsies tie their pack-bullocks, round their little tents and sacks of grain. The pigs, like the bullocks, make a wall of protection against thieves and wild animals.

In the Mandla District pigs are sacrificed to a number of gods. Desawari, Marhi and Dhartimata need a black boar; Khermai is satisfied with a sucking-pig. Mara Deo must have a large full-grown animal. Dulkha Deo and his wife Dulkhorla are also offered pigs. These gods are not very particular how the sacrifice is made. As long as the pigs are killed in their name they do not bother their worshippers. But, on the other hand, they never help them. There are very few gods, only two or three, who actually help people in their trouble if they get their pigs. Rat Mai Mudkhori (the Night Goddess) accepts a pig at night when only the family is in the house. No one should know about the sacrifice and if the

---

<sup>1</sup> But not always. Hira Lal refers to the custom whereby Srimate Brahmins kill a symbolic buffalo, Kalanki Brahmins a cow and other Brahmins a pig in sacrifice and he suggests that these were relics of the human sacrifice. See *Man in India*, Vol VIII (1928), p. 91.

dinner is late and the children have gone to bed, they must not be woken to partake of the food lest they cry and the neighbours know about it. The pork must not see daylight and if any is left it should be buried under the earth lest the day gods take a fancy to it. Then this goddess will keep the householders company in their night journeys. Many Gonds go fearlessly through the jungle at dead of night with this faith in their hearts.

During Diwali the Ahir cowherds sacrifice a pig to Bhaisasur. This god is supposed to stop the milk of the buffaloes and bring disease on the bullocks and cows. The pig is actually killed on the head of a buffalo. The Ahir swings it in the air and strikes it hard between the two horns. The blow is not supposed to hurt the buffalo, which is possessed by the god. This is why, when a buffalo sees a pig, it immediately lowers its horns as if it were possessed by Bhaisasur.<sup>1</sup>

## II

## THE ORIGIN OF THE LARU KAJ

But of all these sacrifices, the most important is that known as the Laru Kaj. This is an elaborate arrangement whereby a sick man, believing his disease to have been brought upon him by Narayan Deo, dedicates a pig to this deity, preserves it with care and honour for three years and then sacrifices it. In this article I propose to study the theory and ritual of the Laru Kaj as it is in the eastern area of the Mandla District. Here the different aboriginal tribes, Gonds, Baigas, Pardhans and the lower Hindu castes have, in this respect, substantially the same ideas and practices, which I have been studying since 1932. By the local Hindus Narayan Deo is specially identified with the sun, and travelling Brahmins and sadhus visit aboriginal houses to recite what is called the Satyanarayan Katha in honour of the Sun God. It is notable that the aboriginals arrange for this Katha to be recited at times of emergency, when someone is ill, when a woman is barren or fears a difficult delivery or when evil spirits are believed to be attacking the family. Here Narayan is associated with the Sun God who, pleased with the devotion, comes to help. Hinduized aboriginals have the Katha performed simply as an act of merit.

<sup>1</sup> On 17 January 1895, a question was asked by Surendranath Banerji in the Bengal Legislative Council about the action of a Sub-Divisional Officer who stopped some Santali cowherds from casting a pig among a herd of cattle by whom it was gored to death in a brutal manner on occasion of the Kali Puja and thus 'hurt the religious feelings of the local public and caused great dissatisfaction among the orthodox Hindus of the locality.' Government considered that interference was justified in view of the law for the prevention of cruelty to animals. (V. E.)

The worship of the Sun is, of course, very ancient in India. In the *Rigveda* there is a reference to its sin-cleansing power. The Gayatri Mantra is of high antiquity. Khadira, says Bhandarkar, prescribes the adoration of the sun for the enjoyment of riches and for the attainment of fame. The hymn addressed by Yudhishtira to the sun after he entered his forest-residence, and the vessel he thus obtained for the production of all the food wanted by him, his family and followers, is well-known. In the seventh century Mayura composed a hundred stanzas to the sun in order to obtain relief from the white leprosy from which he suffered. About the beginning of the eighth century Bhavabhuti makes the Sutradhara, or the manager of the Malatimadhava, offer prayers to the rising sun to remove all his sins and bestow holy blessings on him. Thus the sun has been adored since Vedic times for the removal of sins, and the bestowal of riches, food, fame, health, and other blessings.<sup>1</sup>

Nanimadhab Chaudhuri has recently collected a number of references illustrating the survival of this ancient cult in modern Village India.<sup>2</sup> Gujarati women worship the sun in hope of offspring. The Mal Paharias offer him a goat; the Bhuiyas identify him with the Creator, the Bhumiyas with Sing Bonga. The Chamars beg for children from the sun under the name of Surai Narayana. Dalton says that the 'Kandhs' worshipped Bura Penu as the god of light or Bela Penu the Sun God, but his wife Tari is the source of all the ills that befall mankind.<sup>3</sup>

But in not one of the many examples given by Chaudhuri do we read of pigs being offered to Narayan or the Sun God. He is given goats, flowers (as by the Dhanuks) and white cocks (as by the Bhuiyas and Mundas). This suggests that the Narayan Deo to whom the Gonds and Baigas offer pigs was not originally the Sun God, but a disease-demon with a somewhat similar Gondi name. Under Hindu influence, the ancient demon was assimilated into the Hindu system and identified with the Sun God, but the old form of worship continued.<sup>4</sup>

This is one possibility. On the other hand, the sacrifice of the unclean pig to the purest of the Hindu gods may be a gesture of defiance by the tribesmen; the Laru Kaj may be a sort of parody of the orthodox Sun-worship. There is at least a hint of this in the dramatic parody of asceticism and vegetarianism at the end of the ceremony.

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems* (1913), p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> N. Chaudhuri, 'The Sun as a Folk-God,' *Man in India*, Vol. XXI (1941), pp. 1 ff., where all references are given.

<sup>3</sup> E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> See Verrier-Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 403 ff. Under the influence of 'reformers,' however, some Gonds are now dedicating goats as Laru.

Gond mythology is always in a muddle, and there are a number of different legends about the origin of the Laru Kaj. Every story, however, goes back to the Pandavas. There are also references to the demon Hiranyaksha and Vishnu's Varaha (*Baraha* is the common Chhattisgari word for the pig or boar) incarnation in which he raised the earth from the deep. This is one legend from Māndla : 'When God killed Haranaka Chhatar in his Boar-form, he devoured all the refuse on the earth and in the underworld. After this men were made and they were divided into those who ate rice and pulse—the Hindus, and those who ate meat and fish—the Gonds and Pardhans. God wanted to see what would happen to man if he was given "Sankar Dada's *rasa*," liquor. So he invited all these people to his house. When the liquor was served, the Hindus refused it, but the Gonds drank heavily. When the time for departure came, the Gonds said, "What has this god given us to eat? Nothing. Unless he feeds us on pork we will never be satisfied." Hearing this, the god stopped them and killed a pig for them, and they ate pork and drank liquor with it. To the Hindus he gave rice and pulse and sweets. Before the people left his abode he said to them, "When you forget me in Kali Yug, I shall remind you of my presence as Narayan Deo by bringing disease and trouble into your houses. Then you will sacrifice a Laru in my name and the Hindus will perform my Katha, Satyanarayan Katha."'

The first Laru Kaj that was ever performed was by the Pandavas. This is the legend :

There lived five brothers, the Pandavas, and twenty-one brothers, the Kauravas. They were the sons of two sisters, Kunti and Gandhari, of whom Kunti was the elder and Gandhari the younger. One day in Gandhari's house there was to be some religious rite and she invited her elder sister and her children. The messenger who brought the invitation described to Kunti how the twenty-one sons of Gandhari had made a great elephant of mud for her to ride on. Now Kunti was very worried that she would be insulted if she (being the elder sister) did not also ride on an elephant. But how could her five sons make such a big elephant, and how could they drag it to the place of the ceremony? When Bhimsen saw his mother in trouble, he asked her why she was weeping and she told him the cause. Bhimsen said, 'O mother, cook some *khichri* for me and I will get an elephant from Kajliban Pahar.' In the Hathiban he saw lakhs of elephants, but he chose Meghanandh, their leader, and picking it up on his shoulder carried it home. He hid it behind the house and went to his mother and the mother asked him, 'Have you brought me an elephant?' He said, 'No mother, I could not get one. But give me *pej*, for I am hungry and tired.' After serving

the *pej* the mother went out, and to her great alarm she saw the huge trunk of an elephant on the roof of her house.

Gandhari set out on her mud elephant and Kunti rode on her Meghanandh. The two sisters met by a river. Both wanted to show off and so they entered the river and began to bathe. The mud elephant gradually melted away, and at last it suddenly disappeared and Gandhari was nearly drowned. But Bhimsen caught her by her hair and saved her life. This, however, enraged the twenty-one Kauravas and they decided to kill the five brothers. They put poison in their food and shut them up in a house and set fire to it. Bhimsen broke the earth with his digging-stick and made a way to Patal. There these people lived in Jalalpur on dupi grass. Everyone believed that they were dead and burnt, and their kingdom was looted. Near Jalalpur there lived a Dano called Tadimal. He had a garden of roots and had kept four pigs, Laru, Jhadu, Singo and Surja, for his gods. Bhimsen began to steal his roots. He used to eat the bitter ends of the roots himself and took the sweet parts to his brothers and mother. Now when the Dano went round his garden, he found his roots missing and thought that the pigs were responsible. So he said, 'Surely the time for Laru Kaj is come. I will go and invite my relations from Kalkalpur.' That day as Bhimsen was stealing the roots, he came near the house of the Dano and found the four pigs there. He was inspired with a desire to worship Narayan Deo and began the Kaj.

While Bhimsen was performing the Kaj, his mother was having a bath in the river and one of her golden hairs fell into the water. She picked it up and said, 'I will tie this in a leaf and let it float on the water. Some poor person may find it and make it into an ornament.' So saying she dropped it in the river. The hair was carried down to Kalkalpur where a Dano Princess was bathing. She opened the leaf and when she saw the golden hair she said to herself, 'The person who has this hair must be made of gold itself,' and so she went up the stream till she found the four brothers and the mother. She turned them into goats and took them to her palace.

The story is full of long and humorous details of how Bhimsen gets a message from his brothers and of their own troubles. The moral of the legend is that Narayan was so pleased with Bhimsen for performing the sacrifice that he helped him to overcome his difficulties and rewarded him with the very beautiful Princess Hamesar. Bhimsen was so madly in love with her that he begged Narayan Deo to make the first night fourteen days long. After that with the help of Narayan Deo he got his family out of Patal and they returned to the earth safely and won their kingdom back.

As a reward for his first Laru Kaj Narayan Deo had to give Draupadi in marriage to Bhimsen alone. But Draupadi had a curse upon her. One day when she was a little girl she was playing in the street in front of her house, making mud houses, when suddenly a cow (Lakshmi) came along chased by five bulls and tumbled over the child's mud houses and destroyed them. Draupadi cursed her saying, 'O Lakshmi, you will always be chased by five bulls,' and this made Laskhmi angry and she also cursed in return. 'You will marry five husbands at one time.' So when Bhimsen came back with Draupadi and knocked at the door saying, 'Mother, look what I have brought,' his mother answered from within saying, 'I hope you will share it with all your brothers,' and so he had to.

This story was told by the Pardhans who are famous for their capacity to tell long and humorous stories.

There are many other versions of the legend. A Gond described how Kunti was worried about the marriage of her sons and so Narayan appeared in her dream and told her to do the Laru Kaj. A Baiga, however, told me that Narayan was born in a Chamar's house. Twenty times he was killed in the womb of the Chamarin by Shankhasur. But the twenty-first time Shankhasur was away and the child was born. The Chamar performed Laru Kaj in his honour but when he offered the *prasād* to the Gonds and Baigas, they refused to accept it from his hands. As a result Narayan left the Chamars and went over to the Baigas and Gonds. Ever since the Baigas and Gonds have to do the Kaj instead. That is why the Chamars are considered, from the religious point of view, to be as superior as the Brahmins by many of the aboriginals.

Another Baiga tradition has it that Narayan Deo, Shankhasur and Surja are three brothers. They were the sons of Bhuch Raja and Bhuch Rani (the imbecile Raja and Rani). After the Kaj and Katha they were on their way home. Narayan Deo had eaten two-and-a-half pieces of pork at the Chamar's house. On the way he said, 'Let us all vomit,' and both Narayan Deo and Surja vomited pork while Shankhasur vomited milk. Narayan Deo was very annoyed and said to Shankhasur, 'You want to be greater than us.' So saying he twisted his neck and nearly killed him, but Shankhasur promised him that he would be his servant and would always play at his Katha or Kaj. That is why ever since a *shankh* shell is blown at the Katha and Kaj, and there is a twist in its neck.

A Laru is dedicated to Narayan Deo only when he brings some kind of trouble on a family. If a person is bitten by a snake, the Gunia or magician is immediately called to diagnose the cause. If he traces the disaster to Narayan Deo, the family immediately promises to dedicate a Laru. There are some other troubles

ascribed to Narayan Deo—sore eyes, sore throat, rheumatic pains and especially diseases connected with the throat. A Laru is always dedicated if any woman in the house is barren, whereupon she is supposed to have children.

In Mandla, therefore, Narayan Deo is a disease-demon, rather vaguely connected with the sun, who from time to time attacks a family, takes up his residence on the threshold of a house and must be appeased by the dedication and ultimate sacrifice of a pig.

### III

#### THE DEDICATION CEREMONY

The dedication ceremony is very simple and takes place on any Tuesday or Saturday. A pig is brought and the Gunia takes it to the threshold, where Narayan Deo is supposed to live; and it is made to eat a little rice. If it eats it, it indicates that the god has accepted the creature. After this some people cut its tail, perhaps to distinguish it from other ordinary pigs. But castration is everywhere regarded as necessary. The people cut open the sac and remove the testicles and fill the sac with ashes. The parts which are removed are buried under the threshold. Then this pig is looked after with great care and affection for three years.

During these three years the pig is a constant source of worry to the household. There are many rules to be observed. It has become the vehicle of the god Narayan. At the end of three years it is to be married to him. It thus has a double relationship to the god. For that reason it is greatly respected. It is given good food just as if it was a member of the family. As far as possible it is prevented from eating the leavings of the household. But the most important rule of all is to protect it from any injury; for if it is wounded by a dog or anybody hits it, then Narayan Deo will not accept it. It must be a 'virgin,' and if Narayan Deo sees blood on its body, he may think that some other god has taken it.

Gond and Pardhan women are very good to the Laru pig. They pet it and treat it like a member of the family. The creature soon gets very tame; it lies down beside the mistress of the house and she plays with it as people play with dogs. The girls talk to it, and it follows them to the well or to the forest when they go to bring leaves. The girls playfully tie bundles of leaves on its back and promise it hot gruel or *pej* if it can carry the load to the house without letting it fall down. In the rains the women are specially worried for fear the Laru may get into somebody's garden to eat maize and be injured by a wrathful householder. So they say to it, 'Either stay at home or go along with the cows and look after them.' From the very next day it starts going with the village cattle, and it is believed to help the cowherd in collecting the cows that go astray. If there are goats in the house, it goes

with them and looks after them.<sup>1</sup> It never destroys crops or allows the cows to do so. It sometimes goes and sleeps with the family in the fields when they are guarding the crops.

The Laru must be given some companions—Jhadu, Singo and Surja. These are usually three more pigs. If a man is well-to-do and can afford it, he invites over a hundred people when he dedicates these. Poor people, however, only dedicate Laru and Surja. Surja, Jhadu and Singo are the Laru's guard of honour and are kept to maintain its prestige. Only a few families have all the four, but Surja at least is always dedicated. This is either a white cock or another pig, according to the economic condition and the traditions of the family.

If a Laru is kept for more than three years, it begins to be a nuisance. 'It grows eager for its wedding and to be with its lord.'

## IV

## THE CEREMONY

The first Laru Kaj at which I assisted was in January 1933 at a Gond's house in Karanjia. The pig then was crushed to death by eight men who danced on a great log laid across the creature's chest. Even now I cannot forget its death cries. Since then I have often during the past ten years attended ceremonies in the villages near Sanhrawachhapar and Patangarh. In this area Gonds, Agarias, Baigas, Pardhans, Ahirs, Dhimars and others celebrate the rites in similar fashion, with occasional minor differences.

The chief actors in the ceremony are usually as follows—

The Kajwar and Kajwarin, who may be called the host and hostess, the people who dedicate the pig, and who supply the feast. The Kajwarin has had the chief care of the animal for the past three years.

The Kamri, the priest who makes the *phulera* swing in which the sacred objects are placed, and who attends to the religious side of the ceremony.

The Bhandari is usually the brother of the Kajwarin. He is ceremonially given full charge of the food-stuff, liquor and tobacco for the duration of the Laru Kaj.

<sup>1</sup> An interesting parallel is recorded by A. E. Nelson, in the *Raipur District Gazetteer* (Raipur, 1909), pp. 28 f. When Mr Lowrie was encamped at Raitum in a very wild part of the Raipur District, he saw a boar which acted as grazer to the village. 'Up he came, driving eight goats in front of him; we followed him right on to the village, and in went the goats into a hut....He himself entered last of all.' The owner had had the boar for three years and had brought it up on goat's milk—it sounds very like a Laru. It looked after the goats all day; no thief dared approach nor was a single animal carried off by a panther. 'This marvellous boar, I am sure, could well hold his own at any competition of sheep-dogs in penning his goats.' (V. E.)



The Barua are five young men who have the burden of the manual work; they have to bring wood and water, dig the pit and last of all kill the Laru and cut it up.

The Baruins are five young girls whose duty is to help the Baruas. They make leaf-cups and plates for the guest, serve in the kitchen and add generally to the gaiety of the occasion.

I will now describe in detail the last ceremony I witnessed. It was held in a Pardhan's house at Patangarh on 6-7 July 1943, and the Kamri or priest was a blind old man. He could not do anything himself, but the whole ceremony was done under his guidance and instructions.

The ceremony of the Laru Kaj takes place either on a Tuesday or Saturday. Two or three days before it begins, invitations are sent to relatives in different villages. Early in the morning the house is cleaned as for a big festival. The Kajwar says to his wife, 'Listen. Get *barra* (a delicious preparation made of lentil) for the Laru and for the offering at the *phulera*.' The guests and relations gather together and catch the Surja and the other dedicated animals—Jhadu and Singo.

In the present festival the people had dedicated only a Surja (this was a white cock) and did not have Jhadu and Singo. Since Surja was only a cock, it was simply taken a few yards away from the house to be sacrificed after the usual offerings of fire and incense.

It is often difficult to persuade the cock to eat the rice. Today it refused to do so and soon there was fear and anger in the priest's tone and behaviour. He tickled its neck and pressed its beak to the ground. The crowd nearby asked it, 'Are you waiting for another priest or is it any other goddess that has stopped you? Give us the happiness of seeing you accept our offerings. O Lover,<sup>1</sup> if you don't arrive and decorate the place, what good is our dancing?' Then there were comments—'It is easy to be a magician, but it is altogether a different thing to make a cock eat.' Others accused the host of not keeping the cock in the shade before bringing it to the god, for the people believe that if it is left in the shade it eats immediately. But this cock would not eat the rice for a long time and very bad language was used for both the cock and the god. Other people tried to make the cock eat, and at last it was persuaded and there was a general sense of relief and joy. After the priest had removed a few feathers from its head and offered it to the deity, he killed it and it was cooked and eaten with rice. This feast is known as Pusai.

After this preliminary meal the people began to get ready for the Laru Kaj proper. While the young folk were preparing the food, the older people wove the *phulera* of reeds. The *phulera* is a

<sup>1</sup> *Saiyya*, lover or husband. This remarkable expression is addressed to Narayan Deo, the terrible lover of the Surja whom he will destroy.

swing consisting of a small mat suspended by threads which is to hang above the head of the sacrificed Laru. When it was ready it was very carefully wrapped in a leaf-plate with its thread by which it was to hang and decorated with bel leaves. The next important business was to dig the *narda*, a big pit where all the leavings of the festival are buried. This was done by the five Baruas, and the five Baruins helped them in clearing the earth and piling it round the mouth of the pit. Now hereafter the ceremony began to recall the marriage ritual and the Holi festival. It is the marriage of Narayan and in Narayan's marriage 'you must be as happy as you are at Holi.' The first song the people sang was of how Narayan had climbed the roof of the house to see if the guests or his marriage party were coming. He was anxious and worried. He could not see them from there and so came down from the roof and climbed a tree instead. All the five Baruas held a crowbar and sang as they dug the pit. There was considerable comment on the stinginess of the host who had only given them half a bottle of liquor. 'That will be only enough for Narayan Deo. What about our throats that tire singing his praise?' As they sang, they said, 'Who calls me and what work have they with me?' The other party replied, 'Kajwar, the Raja of the house calls you, for he is preparing for your wedding.'

When the pit was finished the crowbar was driven deep in the centre and the Baruins were made to remove it. To make it more difficult, the men smeared it with sticky matter. But the girls soon cleaned it with mud and got it out. If they had failed, they would have had to give one bottle of liquor as a fine. This reminds one of the removing of the marriage-pole from the hands of the men at a wedding.

After the pit was dug, it was carefully covered with poles and a bamboo frame to ensure that nothing fell into it by mistake. If anything is dropped into it, it cannot be removed, for it is a *tirth* (a holy place) and nothing can be removed from a holy place. It is infected with the taboo. A woman who is in her monthly period cannot eat the Laru pork, but if she bathes in the water of the *narda* pit she is purified and she can take part in the ceremony as other women can. Women who are barren come to the house; they take a little water from the *narda* and bathe in it. They are supposed to get children as a result.

After this the five Baruas covered themselves with blankets and went to visit the other villagers. This is known as 'going out to invite the city.' They sang as they went—

Tari nari nana O, tari nari nana.  
The five daughters are of Parameshwar  
The five sons of Parameshwar.  
O saheb, they are going to invite the city.

The Baruas are usually received with a good deal of ribaldry and on this occasion too dirty water and ashes were thrown over them wherever they went. But a few pice or a little grain must be given as well to help towards the expenses of the ceremony.

While the Baruas were away, the hostess got hot water and *siksa*—the perfumed *haldi* and oil which is usually smeared on a bride and bridegroom—ready for the bath of the Baruas. When they came back, she gave each a token mark on his back, and then they bathed above the *narda*. As they were rubbed with the *siksa*, they sang—

Arjuna the god is marrying !  
Bal Bhima is going to kill the pig !  
Ha ha ri ha ha ri, Bal Bhima will kill it.

Then they sang about the miracles of the first Laru—

Before your Kaj you went away  
And brought anxiety to the house  
You sat below a withered mango tree  
But as soon as you looked up  
It was green and full of fruit.  
You went into a dried-up lake  
And at once it was filled with water.

While they were singing this, their feet were smeared with water, oil and then milk with dupi grass. This was rather monotonous as all the five Baruas and the Kajwar had to go through the ceremony, the last being the Kajwar, who after his bath and anointing of his feet, was presented with the *phulera*. The newly consecrated celebrants were then taken into the house where the *phulera* was to be hung. They had to walk over plates of leaves, since they should not touch the ground till they entered the holy place. There were three seats made ready, one for Narayan Deo, the second for the Kajwar and the third for the Bhandari. The usual pattern on the floor was made of flour and the *phulera* was hung above it. When it was ready the people sang—

What god is getting married, what god is going to kill  
the pig ?  
O saheb, what god is killing the pig ?  
Arjun god is getting married, Bal Bhima is killing.  
O saheb, Nakul is killing, Sahedeo, Dudesun—O saheb,  
who is killing the pig ?  
Listen, all you visitors, listen you supporters, listen  
Satidhar (carrier of the stick)  
Today is the invitation of Sango's Baba.  
I prepare the chowk with marks of pearls.  
O Narayan Baba, sit on the seat.  
Saheb, sit on the seat.

When the Kajwar was taken to his seat they sang and then suddenly made him sit down with a bump. Then the Bhandari was given his seat and there was a ceremonial presentation of all the ritual objects into his hands. Every article was named by an unfamiliar word or synonym. For example, they called chilly *charpar* (as it burns the mouth); haldi *ragbag* (red); salt 'the bones of a Bania'; oil 'the urine of a Telin (oil woman)'. Tobacco was called *surti*, a word common in Bastar, but rare in Mandla; bel leaves were described as *balwanti*. The idea seems to have been taken from the Satyanarayan Katha where Sanskrit is used. As the Kamri made the presentation he repeated every time 'Whoever objects to this thing and doesn't eat it will be cut up and eaten by Narayan Deo,' to which they all replied in chorus, 'O Sada *Sarkatti Hakkane*.'

Just before the killing of the pig, the people said, 'Let us once dance round the *phulera*.' They went round and round it dancing; the vibrations shook the *phulera* and it moved about. This movement was believed to be its dancing, which it is supposed to do of its own accord. They sang 'O Narayan, where were you born and where have you arrived? He was born in the house of the gods and he has come to Bharua Kachhar. You have left behind one hundred and twenty miles of flowers in your garden. Who will look after them?'

Now the moment for the sacrifice had come. The Kamri exclaimed, 'Let us dress the Laru's neck with the garland of the pit.' Immediately before the threshold a hole was dug. Hot water was kept near at hand, and the Laru, which had been in confinement since the previous night, was brought squealing to the place. It was a healthy and strong creature, and the children and women were afraid of being injured by it. But today it looked very pathetic and one of the women said, 'It gazes at you sadly so as to create mercy in your heart.' It was given *barra* to eat and then the five Baruas, holding it firmly, pushed its head into the hole and the women quickly pushed water and earth from the sides around it. Then the Baruas began to heave the pig up and down. Mercifully it was quickly choked and no more heart-breaking squeals were heard. There was now a lot of obscenity and ribaldry, probably to relieve the tension. The five Baruas sang songs—'I will sleep with your mother; I will sleep with your sister,' and the women immediately brought dirty water, mud and cow-dung and threw it at them. Amongst the Dewars, the hostess is supposed to come wearing a new sari and receive the last excreta of the pig, which is believed to be a token of Narayan Deo. When the Laru was dead the five Baruas went away and washed, and were now ready to bathe the pig and singe its hair. The head was cut off and taken to the *phulera*, where it was placed on the floor and left there till the following day.

Now began what was to the people the most exciting part of the ceremony. When the pig was cut open the rich fat and flesh was visible and everyone standing round it watched with absorbed and hungry eyes. For everyone was semi-starved (perhaps most of them had not seen meat for months) and here was the best food of one's life. For the last Laru was killed some six years ago and the next might be after another six years. Every bit of the pig was cooked. No one dared to steal or try to keep the flesh for another day. It was all theirs. They would eat nothing but pork that whole day and the next morning. 'The joy we get from this sight is much more than the joy a poor Brahmin would get out of seeing a pot of ghee,' said one of them. This was blessed meat, and so even if a hundred people were to arrive suddenly it would suffice to feed them all.

It took a long time to cut and get the meat ready for cooking. First they cut its head and covered it with the diaphragm and then it was placed under the *phulera*. It was surrounded with what is called *sil badari*, the long strip of pork from the neck to the tail (which becomes the property of the Bhandari). There were other long pieces called *pil badari*. These were all put under the *phulera* to be given to the people who had come from long distances.

A large ball was made by blowing air into the bladder and this was used to beat the girls. It did not, of course, hurt them, but it made a very great noise. The men also used the *pil badari* to beat the girls and this hurts quite a lot, indeed there was a regular fight between the girls and boys, brothers who were trying to revenge themselves on the sisters of other boys. The feast was finished after midnight. While food was being prepared the story of Girgitawa was sung near the *phulera*. Girgitawa was the first Gond disciple of Narayan Deo who did the first Laru Kaj.

The Katha or life-story of Girgitawa starts from the day he first began earning his livelihood in his fields and the first Laru Kaj he performed on his first earnings. Every sentence began with the words *abto* 'And now' and ended with *bhai samtul* 'Having finished he is ready.' The first thing Girgitawa did was to get his axe and take it to a blacksmith to sharpen. Having done so he got ready to go to the jungle to fetch wood for his plough. Every little step was described in this manner until at last Girgitawa came home with bags of *kutki* and invited his guests for the Laru Kaj.

Then the people imitated the 'Soha' ceremony of the Hindu Katha and blew the *shankh*. While this was being done, a little rice with the liver and entrails was cooked for the Kajwarin. The Kajwar said to the Kajwarin, 'Listen, go and get *bhadi*' (*bhadi* is grain given to the Ahirs in reward for their services in caring for the village cattle). She went with an empty basket.

on her head saying, 'Give me *bhadi*.' The Bhandari asked, 'What did you graze?' She replied, 'I fed Narayan Deo's Laru.' There was a vulgar pun on the word Laru which made everyone laugh, and he gave her some ashes and bones instead of food. When she got the real food, she went and fed herself in the courtyard as a reward for having looked after the Laru for three years.

## V

## THE LAST MORNING

Early the next morning there was the 'bacha' or the promise ceremony. Everyone who was in trouble came to the Kamri who gave them rice. The people believe that if the number of grains thus received from the hands of the Kamri is even, it is unlucky; but if it is odd it is lucky and your wishes will be fulfilled.

After this the *phulera* was made to dance again and then *prasad* was given. The Kamri said that they all should eat the *prasad* under the *phulera* lest Narayan Deo kill and eat them. *Kutki* and *kodon* are the staple food of the Gonds. The *prasad* here was made of its *bhāt* and the curry was of the Laru pork. While they were eating, the people sang—

Kutki Rani looks ugly

But your *bhāt* is lovely as a lotus flower

Urid and mung, khichri and dal of butterflies

Yes, yes, eat Gosaiya eat, Narayan Baba eat.

Then they performed the *tikawani*. In a marriage this is the ceremony when the people give presents to the bride and bridegroom. Everyone assembled there, took a little haldi and smeared it on the head of Laru and fell at his feet asking for his favours. Some people gave a pice or two. In return the Kamri gave each of them a few grains of rice. This they called 'taking promise,' and here is a song they sang—

I have come stumbling, dying

To save myself

Promise to save me, O Narayan Baba.

Now began the last feast of the Kaj. It was known as *mudbhaj* or the 'feast of the head.' Before cutting the head the Kajwar kicked it thrice and recited prayers in which he asked Narayan to leave the family in peace. They cut the head to pieces with an axe and then cooked it with rice. Several people including the Pujari and Baruas sat round it and began to eat. After eating a little, they went round and round the *phulera* singing, 'Take your last morsel, O Narayan Dada, and leave us in peace and go to your people.' This time they danced very vigorously and the whole building resounded with the noise of their feet. When the hostess saw that there was nothing left in the kitchen and the

people were still asking for more, she brought some rice cooked badly with too much salt. At this the men began to spit at the girls who were hiding behind the bins. They now were very rough, and the idea seemed to be to frighten Narayan Deo out of the house. They broke the walls so that he could escape. Then suddenly they snapped the string of the *phuleva* and rushed out of the house, and afterwards buried it in the pit.

While these people were away the pit was being filled in with earth. Now the Pujari had to take a promise from the host as to when he would dedicate another Laru. There was a hot discussion in the family—some saying 'After my son's marriage,' and everyone trying to put it off as far as possible.

All of a sudden there was a great noise as of horses neighing. The Baruas had come on their hobby-horses. These were sticks with sharp thorns. They came into the courtyard and the elders of the house asked them, 'Where do you come from?' They replied, 'We are from the other land. We heard about the great feast and have come to join it. Our horses are tired, for they ran with the wind and defeated it. Can we get food for them?' The old man of the house told the girls (the Baruinis) to come out and feed the horses. The girls giggled, but they did not come out. Then the Baruas pushed their thorn-sticks inside as if the horses were trying to enter the house backwards. One of the girls was hurt, and she came out with a stick to beat the men. The rest followed her and for some time there was real fighting going on between the Baruas and the girls. At last the old people had to intervene and they made peace. Then the boys and girls tied threads round each other's wrists.

They ended this ceremony with a short dramatic entertainment. A Pardhan disguised as a sadhu smeared with ashes all over his body and followed by two disciples came to beg. These were people who had taken the part of Baruas. When they asked for alms, the old man of the house offered them Narayan Deo's pork. The sadhu was shocked and repeated the name of *Ram* several times and showed intense disgust.

There followed a long discussion about the sin of eating any kind of meat. It was very amusing to hear the aborigines start talking excitedly in idiomatic Hindi about the evils of meat and liquor. Ultimately the old man picked up a little earth and said, 'If you are true sadhus, turn this into rice and eat it.'

The Laru Kaj is almost as complicated and full of rites as the marriage ceremony. As in marriage, it ends with a feast for the guests; and as everywhere in India when people are invited to partake of food, they are very slow and hesitant in arriving. The whole thing looks casual enough in the beginning, but once every

one arrives there is a great sense of enjoyment. The blind old man often repeated the two sentences '*Khaye ke ad*' and '*Mandi ke ad*,' meaning all this is only a pretext to be able to feed together and to assemble together in friendship. Another thing he said when the Kajwar made any mistake in the rites was, 'We cannot keep pace with the gods.'

Anyone who has attended both these ceremonies—the Laru Kaj and Satyanarayan Katha—will notice the following similarities between them :

1. The name of the god in each case is Narayan.
2. Both are performed to earn some favour like recovery from illness, or to get a child.
3. There is the rite of Raksha Bandhan in both.
4. Rice is scattered.
5. Bel-leaves and dupi grass, haldi, supari, cocoanut, milk, rice and dal are used in both.
6. There are five goddesses and Panch-lok in one, there are five Baruas and Baruins in the other.
7. *Prasad* or *sithi* is given at both ceremonies.
8. There is an attempt to use unfamiliar language.
9. In both offerings of money are given.

#### NOTE BY VERRIER ELWIN

Anthropology has at last a full account of a ceremony about which there has been much confusion. Russell, followed by Frazer, entirely missed the central purpose of the rite, its medicinal and prophylactic character, to which I drew attention in *The Baiga*. The two articles now presented in *Man in India* supplement my account and study the subject in far greater detail. I described the Laru Kaj as I witnessed it in the Baiga territory of south-eastern Mandla and Pandaria. Mr Hivale tells us how the Gonds and Pardhans (and certain minor Hindu castes) perform the rite in three villages in Mandla. Miss Bhagwat adds a number of details to my own account of the Baiga rite (though she does not tell us what Baiga villages she visited or whether she actually assisted at the ceremony). These are actually more characteristic of the Gond and Pardhan than of the Baiga ceremonies. Mr Hivale has lived in this area for over ten years and has been constantly in the 'Laru atmosphere': I can testify to the accuracy of his description of the Gond and Pardhan version of the rite.

It is impossible, at this period of tribal disintegration, however, to say that 'the Gonds do this' or 'the Baigas do that.' All we can say is that at such a date, in such an area, some of the Gonds or Baigas—or Pardhans—performed a ceremony in such and such a way. Customs are linked to localities rather than to tribes. Miss Bhagwat says that Gond women, unlike Baiga women, do



not assist at the Laru Kaj. But in Mandla (and those parts of Rewa and Bilaspur known to me) they take a prominent part in it. So do Hindu women—Dhimar, Dhulia, Ahir. I have no doubt, however, that for the Drug District (and probably to the West as the influence of Maharashtra is more pronounced) Miss Bhagwat's information is correct.

There is little difference, in eastern Mandla, in the interpretation of the rite given by various tribes. The Baiga (at least when I saw them) performed it most simply. Other differences are not cultural, but economic. A wealthy Gond, who can afford frills and details, will have a very different ceremony to that possible to a poor Baiga. So High Mass in a cathedral differs from a celebration in a country church.

Provided this warning is kept in mind, we have in the two articles now printed a suggestive and important contribution to our knowledge of the pig-sacrifice in India.

# THE USE OF MYTHS IN THE FESTAL PRACTICE OF THE MUNDAS OF CHOTA NAGPUR

By B. N. BHADURI

'MAGIC is nothing but a mistaken application of the very simplest and most elementary process of the mind namely the association of ideas by virtue of resemblance or contiguity while religion assumes the operation of conscious or personal agents superior to man behind the visible screen of nature....' So said Sir James Frazer,<sup>1</sup> speaking of the origin of magic and religion in the lower cultures. As in the lower, so in the higher cultures, practices akin to magic are combined with religious practices so that the advantages of both can be secured, that is, so long as the belief in the efficacy of magic is not totally discredited. Hence we find prayers as well as offerings or sacrifices combined in one religious ceremony both in the form of higher cultures as well as in the lower cultures. The one takes the form of an appeal for help and the other takes the form of a compelling force.

The place of fear in primitive religion is due to its being a well recognized emotion vitally connected with the maintenance of life—such as we find in the relations of uncivilized men with each other. This emotion led primitive man to seek for assistance and deliverance from the cause of the fear, from Powers higher and mightier and believed to be capable of such deliverance, and attempts were made to establish affectionate relations with those benevolent powers, by prayer and propitiation. Such powers have often been termed 'deliverers,' when deliverance was secured what was firmly believed to be through their intervention. Such was the Zeus of the Greeks, the Jehovah of the Israelites and a score of others. Thus the conception of God as a 'Saviour' or deliverer was often founded on incidents in personal or national experience when some unexpected event opened a way of escape from pressing danger. Gradually, in the higher cultures, a general principle is seen enunciated that divine manifestations of a special kind take place from time to time as the need arises for their appearance. These divine manifestations are the prophets of the Christian and Mohamadan religions and the 'Avatars' of the Hindu religion, which enunciate that 'When Dharma, righteousness, law decays, when Adharma, unrighteousness, lawlessness is exalted, then I Myself come forth: for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil, for the establishing firmly of Dharma, I am born from age to age, (*Bhagawat Gita*, iv, 7-8).' The life-history of one of these Hindu Avatars—that of Rama—as composed in the epic

---

1 J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (2nd edition), Vol. I, p. 70.

poem *Ramayana*, is often recited in Hindu households for the purpose of appeasement of an impending calamity or danger in a family. Similarly the Shaptashati Chandi—a chapter of the *Vishnu Purana*—containing the recital of the victories of the special manifestations of Vishnu over the forces of evil and the demons Madhu Kaitaya, the demon Mahisasura, the demons Shambu and Nishumba who ruled the three worlds for a time by ousting the Devas—in the different ages manifestations said to have been called into being by necessity of saving the worlds from the hands of demons and forces of evil—is recited ceremoniously whenever any danger is impending in a family or in a village and is believed to avert the impending danger. It brings peace and tranquillity and is believed to be the best form of ‘Shanti’ and ‘Shvastayana.’

The same manner of propitiation is also found in the primitive cultures of some parts of India. The myths of the Asuras among the Mundas of Chota Nagpur—the story of the oppression of the Asuras—the great iron smelters of prehistoric times—and the deliverance of the Mundas from their hands, through the instrumentality of their supreme Sun God—the Sing Bonga,—is utilized in the same way among the Mundas of some parts of the Ranchi District. Haru Bhagat (a section of the Mundas in some parts of the Manbhum District are called Bhagats)—a Munda of Norhi village<sup>1</sup>—informed me that the story of the adventures of Sing Bonga with the Asuras is recited ceremoniously in a Munda household for the purpose of appeasement of any kind of impending evil or danger and whenever such recitals are held, the neighbours are all called to attend and the story is recited and at each interval in the recital, the assembly shouts ‘Johair’ (Salutation to Thee). This myth is widespread and variant versions are found among the Oraons and the Birhors, which indicates that the calamity dimly portrayed in the myth was a major one in the history of the tribes inhabiting the region where it prevails. I give below a translation of the original Mündari version of the myth as told by Haru Bhagat. Unfortunately it is not complete, but the incomplete portion of the story is the same as that in the Uraon myth.

### TEXT

Sing Bonga said, “Go thou Golden Vulture and Silver Vulture, Go forth and forbid them to work the bellows by night, but to do so by day. The eighty-three uplands and the eighty-one lowlands are being burnt up completely, paddy seeds, kodon seeds are dying. There is misery everywhere.”

The two came and made supplications and prayers but they did not heed them. “We are the Great Bonga, we are the Sing

<sup>1</sup> Of Tamar Police Station, Ranchi District.

Bonga. We are the Ikir Bonga (spirit of the deep pool)—Ho ! Beat the two with the hammer, seize the two with tongs, beat them flat with the hammer, rub them with black charcoal and mud."

So they were daubed with charcoal and mud. Then the two weeping and crying went and raised a cry before the Sing Bonga. "O master and Lord, we are the great Bonga, the Ikir Bonga, where is the Sing Bonga?" Saying this, they are saying, "O Lord, we two were dying of hunger and so we ate the dead cows and buffaloes and our caste-fellows and relations have deserted us."

The Sing Bonga said, "Go ; your caste-fellows and relations also will do likewise and will accept you in their fold."

Then Sing Bonga said, "Go thou Crow the Bhandari (steward) and Lark the Susari (cook), go forth and forbid them. The eighty-three uplands and eighty-one lowlands are being burnt up and are being pierced with red-hot iron. Let them not work the seven furnaces. Let them work by day, let them not work by night ; the paddy seeds and kodon seeds have raised a cry before the Sing Bonga."

So the two came and set on a pipar tree and bar tree with spread out branches. Then, seeing them on the trees the Asura said and asked themselves, "Lo see the two, whence have they come, ask them."

The two said, "This word the Lord has said : 'If you work the bellows by day, don't work at night, if you work at night, don't work by day.' The Lord has sent this message, this word he has sent through us. The eighty-three uplands and eighty-one lowlands are burning, the paddy seeds and the kodon seeds went and prayed to the Sing Bonga."

"Lo, pierce them with the tongs, hammer them with the hammer, besmear them with red earth and black earth ; smear the Crow with black earth and smear the Lark with red earth." Then the tongs were thrust into them and they were hammered, the Crow was besmeared with black earth and the Lark was besmeared with red earth. The two crying and abusing fled away.

They came to Sing Bonga and said, "O Sing Bonga of the heaven, the eighty-three uplands are burning, the eighty-one lowlands are pierced with red-hot iron, the Mother Earth is burning, the sons of men are crying, O Mother, O Father." The Sing Bonga replied, "Go ye and call the Golden Vulture and the Silver Vulture. Let them go to the 12 brothers Deotas and 13 brothers Asurs."

They went and called Sona Didi, Rupa Didi and they replied, "Well, we have not yet stolen anything, we have not yet eaten anything, it is midnight, it is time to sleep, we shall lie down and sleep."

They replied, "The Sing Bonga has called you, let us come." Then the Sona Didi and Rupa Didi (the Golden Vulture and Silver Vulture) came and said, "O Lord, we have come, why have you called us?"

Sing Bonga said, "The sons of men are beating their breasts; the embankments and tanks adorned with lotus flowers are drying up—all is smoke—these things are happening—go ye to the Asurs."

The Vultures replied, "O Lord what shall we eat on the way?"

Sing Bonga said, "On your way drag out cats and dogs—don't feel any repulsion to eat them, don't vomit them. When night overtakes you sit on the spreading branches of pipar and bar trees and sleep, and when it is morning you will arrive at the house of the 12 brothers Deotas and 13 brothers Asurs, and sit on the roof of their house." And so they did. The roof of the house shook, then they sat on the lower roof; this also began to shake. The Asurs said, "What warrior has come?" Some of them said, "No it is nothing of the kind; the Golden Vulture and the Silver Vulture have come. Give them mats to sit on, give them bedsteads to sit on,—give them tobacco and lime. Now ask them what their mission is."

The Vultures said, "No, Bhagwan has sent us." The Asurs said, "Then what words have you brought?"

The Asurs said, "Who is the Great Bonga? Who is Sing Bonga? We are the Great Bonga, we are Sing Bonga. If we can catch hold of Sing Bonga, we shall hurl him into the twelve furnaces. Beat the two birds, beat them, kick them, kick them on the back, make them carry clods of iron on their heads, pull their ears with the pincers. We are the Great Bonga, we are the Sing Bonga. We have arms like stones, we have chests like that of buffaloes, if we can get hold of him we shall sacrifice him like goats or sheep. We shall hurl him into the twelve furnaces. This is the message which you take to the Sing Bonga."

The Vultures returned crying, "O Master, O Father, black earth and red earth are painted over our bodies, we doubt whether our relations and castemen will admit us." The Sing Bonga replied, "Go ye, all your caste-fellows will be like that. Go ye now. Call the crow the Bhandari (steward) and the lark the Susari (cook), call them together."

The Vultures called on them and said, "Are you in or are you out?" The crow and the lark replied, "We are in; now we are in bed for sleep. We have not stolen anything. We have not eaten anything as yet, why are you calling us at this hour?"

The vultures replied, "No, it is nothing. The Sing Bonga in heaven has called you."

The crow and the lark came and said to Sing Bonga, "O Lord, we have come. Why have you called us?" Then the bamboo forest was burning. Sing Bonga said, "With my sword, shield and stick I will go alone to the 12 brothers Deotas and 13 brothers Asurs." Holding ropes of creepers and bamboo, he began to move.

The consort of the Sing Bonga ordered her servants to fetch the Sing Bonga and said, "Go now catch and fetch him. They are 12 brothers Deotas and 13 brothers Asurs and he is alone; he will be killed." Then they brought him back. The Sing Bonga said to his consort, "Why have you called me back?" The consort replied, "They are many. They will kill you. Come into the house. There are seeds of itch in the basket; take and sow the seeds." Then Sing Bonga took the seeds and went out and sowed them. On the way he found a shepherd boy. He caught the tuft of his hair and shook it magically. Thus he was transformed and dressed as a boy afflicted with itch and he went forth.

He went to the courts of the 12 brothers Deotas and 13 brothers Asurs. He offered his services and said, "Will you keep me as a servant?" They replied, "You are afflicted with itch. You are filthy and revolting like a creeping worm. You are stinking. They are a pair; an old man and woman. They have no sons, they have none. They will keep you. You will tend their cows and goats." He was kept by the old pair who advised the boy: "You can go in all directions but don't go in yonder direction—there the Asur boys play with balls and sticks." The boy thought within himself thus, "These two daily forbid me to go. I will go and see." He went and saw them playing with balls and sticks. He thought, "I will come back to my house, I will make balls of hen's eggs and a cake of rice-husk as *kati*. I will once play with balls and sticks." The old woman said, "They have iron balls and iron *kati*. Will you be able to stop their balls with yours?" The boy replied, "It will do, old grandmother." Holding the balls of hen's eggs and the cake of rice-husk as *kati*, he went forth. "O our sore-afflicted boy, throw your ball." Then he threw. The boy said, "Now you shoot." They shot by the sides and edges, it grazed and flew off. "Now once you throw the ball." They threw the ball. The sore-afflicted boy shot. He shot with the hen's egg and the cake of rice-husk as *kati*. The iron ball and the iron *kati* broke. At this the Asur boys said, "We will cause you to be scolded by the old man and old woman." Then the old pair scolded him severely. The sore-afflicted boy said, "Won't you give me food?"

The remainder of the original Mundari manuscript has been lost but the rest of the story is the same as the version of the Oraons and Bihors (described on page 402 of *The Bihors* by S. C. Roy and on pages 474-476 of *The Oraons* by the same

author). The story is that the report of the wonderful power of the sore-afflicted boy was carried by the Asur boys to their elders. Once it so happened that in the process of smelting iron it got spoilt. The Asurs tried to find out the defects and remedy them but failed. Their witch-doctors failed to give help. So the sore-afflicted boy was summoned to find out the defects in the furnace. The boy entered the furnace and directed the Asurs to plaster it up with mud and blow the bellows for seven days and nights. They did so and at the end of the seventh day the boy emerged from the furnace covered with gold. The Asurs wondered and asked the boy to teach them the art. The Sing Bonga in the form of the sore-afflicted boy agreed and asked the Asurs to enter the furnace. They did so, and the wives of the Asurs were asked to plaster up the furnace with mud and blow the bellows and they did so. In this way all the Asurs were burnt and died. When the door of the furnace was opened, the charred bones of the Asurs fell out. The sore-afflicted boy then vanished. Thus did the Sing Bonga deliver the world from the sufferings caused by the Asurs.

Whenever there is any suffering in a family of Mundas the recital of this story with the proper ceremonies is believed to bring relief.

# PRIMITIVE ABORIGINAL CULTURES IN THE DECCAN

BY CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

DURING my work among the aboriginal populations of His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Dominions, I have had the opportunity of studying some of India's most primitive cultures. Hyderabad, in the heart of India, is of obvious importance for the ethnology of the sub-continent, for here meet and dovetail two major spheres of culture, that of the Central Indian belt and that of South India and the Western Ghats. These two spheres contain a wide range of aboriginal races, from the primitive jungle tribes, which, surviving only in small numbers, lead an inconspicuous existence in a few refuge areas, to such great races as the Gonds, who are far advanced on the road of material progress and have played a prominent role in Indian history.

The most primitive among the tribes of the Deccan, both in racial features and material development, are the Chenchus who inhabit the wooded hills that line the gorges of the Krisna River and stretch southwards into Madras Presidency. Only in Hyderabad, however, do the old economy and social organization still persist, for in Madras Presidency the Chenchus' tribal life has dissolved under the impact of administrative measures aimed at a complete transformation of their economy. The small group of Chenchus in the rocky uplands of the Nizam's Dominions is consequently of considerable importance to Indian ethnology; here we find a community of primitive food collectors and hunters who subsist, as they must have subsisted for thousands of years, almost entirely on the wild products of nature.

The Chenchus live in small groups of two to twelve families scattered over the hills and frequently shifting from one collecting ground to the other. During part of the year they settle in small round houses, bamboo-walled and thatch-roofed, but in the hot season many Chenchus live in leaf-shelters or, like paleolithic man, in the shade of overhanging rocks. The quest for food and water, and an innate nomadic spirit make them move from camp to camp and their material possessions, so scanty that they may easily be carried with them, present no obstacle to these seasonal wanderings.

Even to-day the Chenchus depend for more than nine-tenths of their food-supply on the roots, tubers, fruits and herbs which they gather in the forest. An iron-spiked digging-stick is their principal implement and if we were to adopt the prehistorian's habit of naming a whole culture after one prominent instrument we would have to label the Chenchus' 'digging-stick culture.' Digging for roots is among many primitive races mainly the task of



the women, but among the Chenchus men too spend most of their days in collecting roots, and hunting with bow and arrow plays to-day but a minor role in their economy. In recent generations some Chenchus have acquired a certain amount of live-stock, mainly buffaloes, and cattle-breeding seems to be well suited to their semi-nomadic style of life. Agriculture, on the other hand, though encouraged by the administration, makes little appeal to the Jungle Chenchus. A few families plant during the rains small garden plots with maize and millet, but the grain thus raised is but an insignificant item in their diet. More important are the food-stuffs bartered for jungle produce and baskets and there can be no doubt that the Chenchus have maintained a barter relationship with outsiders for many generations ; indeed it is only through such transanctions that they can have obtained such articles as the iron with which to tip arrows and digging-sticks.

The economy of the Chenchus is very different from that of most Indian aboriginals. There is an almost complete lack of planning and of co-operation. The Chenchu leads a hand-to-mouth existence and each family fends largely for itself ; such co-operation as may exist is incidental and not institutional, there is no complicated ritual, no system of reciprocal obligations and privileges to co-ordinate economic activities. At heart every Chenchu is an individualist, who likes to be able to follow his own inclinations and even members of the small groups of near kinsmen separate on the slightest provocation and often without any apparent reason ; it is not unusual for a family to live at least part of the year alone in a one-house settlement, with no other human habitation for miles around.

Individualism permeates the religion as well as the social sphere. Any man may approach the deities with prayers and offerings ; there are no priests and no persons with special faculties of interpreting the voices of gods, and the only form of communal worship, in which all men of the group participate, are the first fruit offerings when certain wild fruits come into season. All deities are thought of in anthropomorphic terms and the two most important are Bhagabantaru the sky-god, and a powerful female deity, Garelamaisama, who is the recipient of the first fruit offerings. There is good cause to believe that the idea of the sky-god was adopted from the surrounding Telugu populations, while the forest deity Garelamaisama is the old supreme being of the Chenchus. Very much in contrast to most Indian aboriginals and the lower Telugu castes the Chenchus do not sacrifice animals to the gods, although they do offer Garelamaisama small pieces of every animal killed in the chase.

Taken as a whole Chenchu culture has little in common with the other aboriginal cultures of the Deccan, and all its affinities

point to the South and particularly to the Veddas of Ceylon. And in view of the primitive racial element in the Chenchus, which Eickstedt has described as Malid, and which links them with the jungle tribes of the South-west and Ceylon, these cultural affinities are not surprising: they confirm only that the Chenchus belong to the oldest surviving racial and cultural stratum in India.

There can be little doubt that the populations of nomadic jungle-dwellers, of which the Chenchus are a small relic, lived originally in paleolithic style; even to-day the economy of the Chenchus of Hyderabad is very much the same as that of paleolithic man. In India we are not yet in a position to correlate ethnological and prehistoric cultures with certainty, but it is most probable that tribes comparable to the Chenchus were responsible for the flake-industries found in many parts of Peninsular India, such as for instance, the hill-tract between the Penganga and the Godavari, where rough stone flakes can be picked up on the surface by the thousand.

But which ethnological culture can be regarded as representative of those earliest neolithic civilizations, characterized by sausage-shaped or oval axe-heads, partly or entirely polished? This civilization seems to lie between the paleolithic culture of various descriptions, and the later neolithic cultures characterized by the shouldered adze, which has been linked with the Austroasiatic peoples. I must admit that for long I was at a loss even to guess at the race and civilization which in India might be correlated with this earliest known neolithic industry. During recent field-work I have, however, come upon a group of tribes whose culture may well be a survival of those races that in early neolithic times must have peopled the Deccan in considerable strength. Let us say at once, that we have no direct proof of the connection of any existing population with the ancient makers of the proto-neolithic oval axe-heads. It is as yet only by inference and a process of exclusion that we can attempt a correlation of certain ethnological stratum and the earliest neolithic civilization of the Deccan.

Who were the races following upon the nomadic tribes of food-gatherers that in paleolithic times roamed the wide forests of the Deccan without ever attempting to increase the productivity of the land by human endeavour?

Obviously people more advanced in material achievements than the Chenchus, people who had taken the fateful step from food-gathering to food-production and thereby paved the way to a more settled life in which man's total energy was no longer absorbed by the quest for food. Agriculture in these earliest neolithic civilizations was certainly not very highly developed and even to-day there are tribes in the Deccan whose economy stands midway

between that of food-gatherers and fully fledged agriculturists, and one of these are the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad.

The Hill Reddis or Konda Reddis, as they call themselves, inhabit those parts of the Eastern Ghats which flank the Godavari Gorges some thirty miles above the delta. They are of a more progressive racial type than the Chenchus, but distinctly more primitive than their neighbours the Koyas, and a Veddid strain is very pronounced in their physical make-up.

The Reddis are agriculturists, but their methods of cultivation are extremely primitive and the yield of their fields forms only part of their food-supply. In their traditional system of cultivation they rely entirely on human labour, unaided by domestic animals. This feature they share with many aboriginal tribes of India who practise shifting-cultivation on hill-slopes, but there is a great difference between the elaborate and very productive shifting-cultivation of such tribes as the Ao Nagas, and the Hill Reddis' crude methods of raising small quantities of grain with the help of no other instrument than the digging-stick. And in this lies the peculiar character of Reddi culture. More advanced than that of the Chenchus it ranks in material development far below the majority of the aboriginal civilizations which occupy the Central Indian belt and the mountain tracts of Assam. The technical means employed by the Reddi cultivator are poor, axe and digging-stick are his only implements. He fells and burns the forest on hill-slopes and then broadcasts small millets in the ashes, or dibbles maize, jawari, and pulses in holes made with his digging-stick. The hoe, or any other instrument for turning over the soil is unknown to him, and this distinguishes his cultivation from the far more efficient hoe-cultivation of other aboriginal races.

I believe that in the past too little importance has been attached to this difference; for as long as we lump together all shifting-cultivators as if the use of axe and fire was the only decisive trait, it is difficult to attain a true appreciation of India's ancient aboriginal cultures. If on the other hand we recognize in digging-stick cultivation and hoe-cultivation, two separate stages in the development of human civilization, the existing cultures of primitive cultivators arrange themselves into two distinct groups. On the one side are the complex and comparatively rich cultures, such as those of all the Assam hill tribes, whether speaking Austroasiatic or Tibeto-Burman languages, the Munda tribes of Chota Nagpur, the Austroasiatic races of Orissa such as Saoras, Gadabas and Bondo Porajas, and ultimately most of those Gond tribes, who have not yet taken to the use of the plough. On the other side we find primitive cultivators like the Hill Reddis of the Deccan, the Baigas of the Central Provinces and several of the tribes of the Western Ghats, such as the Panyer. Naturally no

clear line can be drawn between the two groups. The Dires of Southern Orissa, for instance, though resembling the Reddis in many ways, speak an Austroasiatic tongue and use simple hoes like the Bondos, and even the most northern group of Reddis, which borders on the Dires, has adopted the use of similar hoes. Another tribe of the Deccan on a similar stage of economic development is the Kolams in the hills between the Godavari and the Penganga and in the neighbouring parts of Berar. Like the Reddis they broadcast small millets and dibble jawari and maize with digging-sticks, but besides the digging-stick they use simple hoes, a knee shaped haft, with an iron point affixed by means of a socket. These hoes, whose iron points are used alternatively on digging-sticks, do not serve to turn over the soil like a Naga or Gadaba hoe, but only to scratch the ground after the seed has been broadcast.

What is the type of material and social culture that can be supported by so rudimentary a system of cultivation as that of the Hill Reddi? Less dependent on the wild produce of nature than the Chenchu, the Reddi is yet still far from subsisting entirely on his crops. Food-gathering occupies a prominent place in his economy, and there are many days and weeks when the Reddi relies on collecting the edible fruits and plants of the forest. As far as gathering of wild vegetable produce is concerned little progress on the efficiency of method is perceptible, the main implement of the Reddi woman, like that of her Chenchu sister, being the digging-stick. It is only in hunting and fishing, which undoubtedly offer a wider scope for man's ingenuity, that the Reddis employ methods superior to those of the Chenchus and other primitive jungle tribes, notably by concerted action in the chase and the use of mechanical devices for trapping game.

The dwellings of the Reddis are small, but firmly built houses, of timber and bamboo, which are usually inhabited for as many years as the surrounding hill-slopes bear satisfactory crops. When the Reddi shifts his fields to more distant slopes he moves also his house. Settlements have therefore little permanency, but in the course of years the same sites are re-occupied again and again. Wherever the old economy persists settlements are very small, consisting often of only three or four homesteads tucked away in the jungle and seldom comprising more than a dozen houses. For as long as wild-growing produce is an essential part of diet it is advantageous to live in small communities, lest too many families prey on the edible fruits and plants available in the near vicinity. Small settlements and single homesteads widely scattered in upland valleys make for a loose social organization and it seems indeed that the Reddi is hardly more tied by bonds of clan and village-community than the semi-nomadic Chenchu. But agriculture and the

more advanced methods of hunting do bring about a greater amount of co-operation and planning, and the yield of the fields free the Reddi for at least part of the year of the daily necessity of going out in search of food. Temporary leisure and the accumulation of food supplies allows of the celebration of feasts, and feasts are held on a community basis. Ritual develops and men suited by temperament and descent act as priests and representatives of the community. There is the belief in innumerable *Konda devata* or hill deities and in the Earth-mother, who is propitiated with animal sacrifices so that she may bestow her favour on the crops, but there is no idea of any supreme being, nor is the moral code upheld by divine sanction.

I have mentioned already that in trying to correlate the earliest neolithic cultures of India with any ethnological stratum we must turn towards the most ancient and primitive of the agricultural civilizations. The Reddis seem to be representative of such a civilization, and their style of life resembles indeed very closely the one drawn by prehistorians on the grounds of material aspects of proto-neolithic culture: a simple agriculture unaided by any domestic animals, food-gathering and hunting as still important occupations and the keeping of pigs and perhaps fowls, being its main characteristics.

To-day tribes in this stage of development survive only in small groups, and it is a moot point which races of primitive cultivators were originally the bearers of the earliest civilizations in India. It must have been a race more advanced than the Malid forest tribes of food-gatherers, but less progressive than the folks who poured into India from the east in late neolithic times, and were responsible for such rich cultures as that of the Mundas or Gadabas. What tongues the earliest cultivating tribes originally spoke we do not know, for languages like the Telugu of the Reddis are obviously not their own; but it is safe to say that these tongues were pre-Dravidian as well as pre-Munda, and most likely they are irretrievably lost. But the cultures of these earliest cultivators still exist in some remote hill-tracts of the Deccan and Southern India and their study is one of the most pressing tasks of anthropologists in India.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

ORIGINAL notes, queries, answers to queries, quotations from journals and newspapers for this section should be sent to Verrier Elwin, D.Sc. (Oxon.), F.N.I., Patangarh P.O., Dindori Tahsil, Mandla District. Contributors are requested to type in double space on one side of the paper only, to give full and exact references and to follow carefully the suggestions 'To Contributors' published from time to time in *Man in India*.

### THE STYE AND THE COUVADE

IN a remarkable paper contributed to *The British Journal of Medical Psychology* (Vol. XIX, pp. 37-55), W. I. Inman gives a number of examples of the couvade in modern England. He suggests that 'styes and tarsal cysts—both of which are affections of the glands of the eyelids—are often associated in some mysterious way with thoughts and fantasies about birth.' He recalls 'the trifling bit of folklore about the efficacy of the application of a gold wedding-ring as a cure for styes,' that there is some 'causal relationship between styes and menstruation, which after all is only a missed pregnancy'; that in one enquiry covering 158 patients 'an exceptional interest in birth was present in 92.3% of styes and in 80% of tarsal cysts.' It is impossible to summarize the whole article, with its wealth of clinical material, here; but it would be interesting if field-workers in India could contribute any supplementary notes on the connection between lesions of the eye and birth fantasies and facts. Do fathers, agitated and concerned about a birth in the family, suffer from styes? Is this, in fact, an example of the mechanism of the couvade?

### KHEL TAMASHA

ONE of the most remarkable examples of comparative ethnography occurs in W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and other Primitive Tribes in Central India,' *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), p. 178. Quoting D. H. Gordon's article on 'Korku Memorial Tablets' (*Man*, 1936, No. 19) that when a tablet is ready 'the village holds a feast which 'lasts well into the night and culminates in a merry-making play,' Koppers asks, 'Is this word (*Khel*) perhaps connected with some ancient social organisation of the Korkus? It may in any case be as well to call attention to the fact that among the Naga tribes the division of villages into "Khels" is an old institution.' *Khel tamasha* is the ordinary Hindi expression for 'fun and games,' *khe* being the universal word for a game. *Khel* is often used for sexual intercourse and *tamasha* has general associations with the vulgar and obscene: Koppers himself describes (p. 169) the obscene element in the Korku feasts. The Assamese *khel* is an entirely different word.

V. E.

### RAIN SONGS (*Mevlo*) OF SOUTHERN GUJARAT

'MEVLO' comes from the word 'Mehul' meaning rain. The Sanskrit word is *Megha*, rain-cloud. To 'take out a *mevlo*' is to take out a procession in order that the rain god may be appeased to send showers. When rain fails to appear in time men and women of south Gujarat agricultural communities pour water on each other and 'play *mevlo*'. Men dress themselves at night in queer and frightful costumes and frighten the people who are sitting in the open to cool themselves. Women of the Dubla, Shepherd Dhed and Fisherman castes take out rain processions and go about the villages singing songs. This communal singing is supposed to bring rain and at the same time afford opportunity to the poorer classes to collect some grain during the scarcity period. Thus *mevlo* becomes a form of group-begging in times of workless days.

When a number of women of one of these castes gather together and decide to take out a *mevlo* procession they must complete five or seven villages before they can stop. The proceed is grain—mostly jowari, and it is equally divided among those who take part. The central figure of the procession is a woman who carries some crude images of the rain god made from wet earth. They are covered with momordica creepers known as bitter tindora in Gujarat and bitter giloda in south Gujarat. A little jowari, milk, curd and kumkum is sprinkled on the images and creepers.

The procession moves from house to house singing songs and collecting grain. The women-folk of the house greet the procession by throwing water over the *mevlo* images as well as over the procession. It is believed that when fishermen or shepherds take out a *mevlo* procession rain must soon fall.

The belief that *mevlo* causes rain also extends to the Islami agriculturist population. Men take out a procession at night crying, 'Allah Hokkal, Pani Mokkal; Allah Hej, Pani Bhej.' This procession is fed by the householders with loaves and curd, probably indicating a more liberal hospitality.

This *mevlo* is probably connected with a Burmese festival called *Taghola*. This is a five day's festival during which gaily decorated men and women go about the town in carts and other vehicles singing songs. Housewives throw on them specially cooled water and as the procession moves about there is much hilarity and merry-making. This very closely resembles our *mevlo*. It appears that both are initiated with a view to cause a sympathetic inducement of rain, to pass over the period of drought and to find amusement or distraction.

B. L. DESAI, in *Journal of the Gujerat Research Society*, Vol. VI (1944), pp. 22 f. Mr Desai gives six songs in original with a translation.

#### WEDDING SYMBOLISM

ON 19 February 1944, I attended a Jain wedding in Dumka, Santal Parganas. The wedding ritual was remarkable for its symbolism and I note below some of the more salient characteristics.

At each corner of the marriage square a plaitain was driven in the ground while a line of little dishes, their rims glued together, dangled from the centre of the shed. A square red pillar was planted in the earth just outside the mandap and seven little red birds made of wood were put on the lintel of the house. When the bridegroom arrived he touched them with a sword. The touching of the birds is said to be a survival of Rajput marriage by capture. Towards the end of the ceremonies four cocoanuts were cracked on a curry roller and the milk spurted out.

W. G. A.

#### THE TRIBES OF THE NILGIRI HILLS

PROFESSOR L. SCHERMAN published a number of articles on the tribes of the Nilgiris in *Geist des Ostens* in 1913-14. This monthly journal ceased publication during the First World War. Scherman's remaining material has been published, unfortunately in German, in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. LXII (1942) pp. 13-35, which gives the following summary.

'The tribes inhabiting the heights and slopes of the Nilgiris are to be divided into two groups, the first consisting of Todas, Badagas and Kotas; the second of Kurumbas, Irulas and Paniyans. This classification is not dependent upon the time elapsed since they settled there, but upon quite other facts. The first three peoples have almost no contact with countries outside the Nilgiris. Compared with them, the Kurumbas, Irulas and

Paniyans are shy and hidden communities, but this isolation cannot serve as evidence for their past nor for their future fate, because they were and partly still are connected with kinsmen living far from their poor huts.

'Secondly, Todas, Badagas and Kotas—themselves not equal in rank—literally look down from their summits upon the tribes of the slopes. These are so to say *parvenus* or helots with whom one dislikes any intercourse as long as egoistic motives do not make it expedient.'

#### THE CANNIBAL COMPLEX

PROF. J. H. HUTTON, in his Presidential Address before the Royal Anthropological Institute on 10 March 1943, took as his subject 'The Cannibal Complex.' Dealing with cannibalism arising from mere hunger he recalls that 'Diodorus mentions that the ancient Egyptians in a famine ate each other before they would eat their sacred animals, and Porphyrius says that a Phœnician or Egyptian would sooner eat human flesh than that of the cow, a statement which might even be found true in India today of some Hindus.' Is this true?

#### GESTURE LANGUAGE

In a review of La Meri's *The Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance* (Columbia University Press, 1941), M. B. Emeneau makes the following interesting suggestion. 'It is noteworthy,' he says, 'and perhaps to be interpreted as a general tendency in Hindu culture to raise certain aspects of the subliminal to consciousness (cp. also *yoga*-practices), that Hinduism in general and the Tantric sects in particular make extensive use in ritual and religious practice generally, not only of the intrinsically meaningless gestures (of the dance and iconography), but also of intrinsically meaningless vocables. For example, the famous *om* and *hum* and the not so famous *hrim*, *hrām*, *phat*, and many others, are meaningless, though effectively valuable, religious noises in origin, whatever their later use has been given to them by the developed dogma.' (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. LXII (1942), p. 149). It would be interesting to study how far the meaningless vocables used in aboriginal songs and charms can be similarly interpreted.

V. E.

#### PARDHAN SEPTS AND THE PLACENTA

THE association of the placenta with sept-origins is interesting and important. The reason why the Parteti sept is today free to undertake any dangerous or defiling duty—such as readmitting the excommunicate into caste—is that long ago there was a quarrel between the first Parteti and the Markams and Marabis. The Parteti hid in a house where a woman had just given birth to a child and the placenta was still lying on the floor. To save him the woman smeared him with her blood and made him lie down beside the placenta. There is a similar story about the Potta sept of the Agarias. The Jamati Potta sept of the Gonds is also associated with a placenta. A group of Potta Gonds went hunting, but they got nothing. One of them, however, was so 'mad for meat' that he wandered about looking for some. A woman carrying wood from the jungle had been delivered of a child under a tree. She had staggered home leaving the placenta lying there. The Gond, not realizing what it was but only recognizing that it was flesh, took it home and cooked and ate it. When his mistake was known he was separated from the other Potta Gonds and a new sept was formed.

SHAMRAO HIVALE

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF CERTAIN PARDHAN SEPTS

VILLAGE gossip attributes to some of the Pardhan septs certain strongly marked characteristics. For example, the Partetis are commonly arrogant and bumptious, swift to quarrel and independent of tribal censure. The



reason is probably that it is one of their duties to admit excommunicated Pardhans back to the tribal fellowship; to do this they have to 'bear on their heads the sins of the whole tribe.' They are accordingly sometimes called 'Chamar Parteti,' for they 'cure' sins as the Chamars cure hides. When a Parteti worships he makes a little bag of parsa leaves in imitation of the leather sack in which a Chamar cures his hides, and hangs this up before the god with water and a little bit of skin in it. Since the first Parteti was saved by the blood of a mother at child-birth, modern Partetis may sometimes smear their moustaches with blood at the birth of one of their children and swagger about a bazaar to indicate their contempt for convention. Because of their . . . . . and their power over the excommunicate, people are . . . . . them and keep on their right side. It is said that 'their privates are always smooth and oily with the seventeen seers of oil that are poured upon them.'

The members of the Tekam sept are said to have the sweetest voices and to be the most pleasant-spoken of the Pardhans. The legend is that in the old days there lived in Bairath a young and very beautiful Tekam girl. She had, a very unusual thing for a woman, a sacred bana fiddle which she played divinely and defeated every Pardhan who came to ask for her in marriage. But Bisi the son of Addesirwa and Sauni Dokeri at last conquered her by playing a tune that imitated the swift movements of a rat, and thus won her. He refused to take her bana to his house and she dropped it on the way, where it can still be seen turned into a stone. This girl afterwards became Sarso Mata and now sits in the throats of the Tekams and gives sweetness to their songs.

Girls of the Potta sept are supposed to be the most beautiful, as the men are said to be the ugliest of the Pardhans. The girls are very free in their ways and it is said that a Potta wife will never let her husband look at her belly, for fear he should notice the marks on it caused by frequent abortions.

Markam families are said to have many more girls than boys. There is a story that once a Markam father had so many daughters that he despaired of marrying them. He took them all one day to a bazaar with a sack full of grass seed. He tied them in a row behind the sack and announced that whoever could guess its contents might have them all. A Parteti wearing sandals made of rat-skin came by and kicked the sack in scorn. The skin of his sandal was so thin that one of the grains stuck to it and he was able to guess what was in the sack and so won all the girls.

Syam girls are said to have the most lavishly constructed vaginae and Syam men the largest testes of all the Pardhans.

SHAMRAO HIVALE

#### WHAT IS FRAZERISM?

IN his generous review of my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* published in the last number of *Man in India*, Dr D. N. Majumdar suggests that I have been 'profoundly influenced by the Frazerian method which in anthropology today does not command sufficient prestige.' As this raises the interesting question of what is wrong with Frazer and why it is necessary for us to dodge, if possible, his all-pervading influence (and I entirely agree with Dr Majumdar that we should), it will be useful to ask ourselves what Frazerism really is.

Of course, like everyone else in my generation, I have been influenced by the man whom Malinowski called 'the greatest anthropologist of our age,' who to Seligman was the 'supreme interpreter on the literary side of man's hopes, fears and beliefs,' who inspired much of *The Waste Land* and won from its author the tribute that *The Golden Bough* had 'influenced our generation profoundly,' of whose ideas Brailsford has said that 'they are as much 'a necessary part of the culture of our day' as Darwin's.

But I am not myself a Frazerian, nor do I follow anything that can be called a Frazerian method. Indeed it would be hard to imagine anything less like Frazer's peaceful and cloistered Cambridge life than mine. I doubt if Frazer ever saw an aboriginal; I hardly ever see anyone else. And on looking through my book I cannot find there any serious 'comparative study of crime in India and abroad' to which he refers. A few statistics to put the incidence of Maria crime in its right proportions, reference to the study of suicide in other countries, less than half a dozen parallels to European crime inserted for their intrinsic interest—this does not make a man a Frazerian.

For what is it that is regarded in Frazer—and still more in Westermarck and Briffault—as something less than the scientific best? It is fundamentally that as Lowie says, Frazer was 'a scholar, not a thinker—and a scholar, moreover, who in his eagerness to assimilate descriptive data has somewhat perversely ignored the strides of theory. Thus, he has hardly kept astride of the attempts to supplant the older parallelist schemes with a more critical insight into the effects of tribal intercourse; and his interpretations suffer from an a priori use of vulgar psychology, with constant lapses into a false rationalism.'

'Frazerism' as a term of reproach, however, is rightly used by Dr Majumdar to mean the habit of drawing parallels and contrasts. But here we must be careful. Not all parallels are to be avoided. Provided that such parallels are out of the material and are not artificially imposed upon it, and that the things are really comparable and are taken from reputable sources, they may be richly suggestive and often add both to the value and interest of a work. The trouble about Frazer, and still more about Westermarck and Briffault, lay in their indiscriminate use of sources until it seemed that a thing had only to be in print to be regarded as quotable, and in their comparisons of individual ideas and customs which when seen in relation to their entire cultural background were not really comparable at all.

I am interested in parallels chiefly in those within the Indian continent, for I think it is important to see each tribal culture in its proper relationship with its neighbours and above all with the Hindu background. Some of my parallels, however, and I frankly admit it, have a purpose that is not strictly scientific. In a novel I wrote some years ago, *A Cloud that's Dragonish*, on the theme of primitive witchcraft, I prefaced each chapter with a quotation from some European writer on the same subject. This had a far from Frazerian purpose; it was simply intended to remind the European reader that he had no cause to look down on the Indian aboriginal—for his own superstitions were just as absurd. Similarly I tried to show that the Agarias' belief in the magic properties of iron did not condemn them to be classified as poor savages since the most enlightened nations of the world had similar ideas. I followed, on a very small scale, the same plan in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, but here it was hardly necessary, for the crimes of civilization are sufficiently publicized. Such parallels are not perhaps strictly scientific; but in view of the political and psychological climate of modern India, they are perhaps worth while.

V. E.

#### WITCHCRAFT: NEWS ITEMS FROM LONDON

##### I

LONDON March 31: A WITCHCRAFT trial at the Old Bailey court ended to-day when all the four defendants were found guilty. The passing of the sentence has been postponed until Monday.

The defendants were charged under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 with pretending to exercise conjuration, causing money to be paid by false pretences and creating public mischief. The defendants are Mrs Helen Duncan, medium, who practices held at Master Temple Psychic Centre; Ernest Edward Homer, Elizabeth Anne Jones, known as Mrs Homer, and Mrs Frances Brown.

During the hearing the Recorder said that the prosecution involved no attack on spiritualism or religious persecution. 'By no possible exaggeration can this case be magnified into anything more than a commonplace prosecution alleging fraud,' he said.

## II

LONDON April 3: Mrs Helen Duncan, who claims to be a spiritualist medium, was today sentenced to nine months' imprisonment at the Old Bailey after a seven days' trial under a 200 year old statute. Mrs Frances Brown, another of the accused, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment, while Ernest Edward Homer and Mrs Elizabeth Jones, known as Mrs Homer, were each bound over for two years. A notice of appeal was given on behalf of all the four defendants. The jury had reached a verdict of guilty after 25 minutes' deliberations on Friday.

Mrs Duncan collapsed on hearing the sentence and broke the silence which had lasted throughout the trial. 'It is all lies,' she cried. The Recorder declared that the jury did not decide whether spiritualistic manifestations were possible, but merely that those exhibitions made by the defendants amounted to fraud. It was stated during the proceedings that Mrs Duncan had made £112 in six days.—*The Times of India*, 4 and 5 April 1944.

# MAN IN INDIA

---

Vol. XXIV ]

September 1944

[ No. 3

---

## COMMENT

ON 13 April, 1944, Dr. B. S. Guha broadcast a talk on 'Culture Contacts' from All India Radio, Lucknow. His talk was of great current importance and by permission of All India Radio, we are re-printing it as the present comment. In this talk, Dr. Guha said :

'In talking of the effects of Culture Contact, I do not mean by 'Culture' refinement or polish as when we speak of a cultured person or what the Germans understand by 'Kultur' implying high proficiency in arts and literature. I use it in the objective sense for the entire activity of a community, both material and spiritual. Viewed in this sense it includes not only food, clothing, houses, arts and industries but also social usages, religious rites, traditions and literature which form a complex whole and constitute the total behaviour of a race or tribe. Such culture forms range from simple ones with few traits of the primitive folks to the highly sophisticated organized cultures of advanced nations. Originally culture arises out of the basic needs of a people around which grows a multitude of intellectual and emotional symbols characteristic of the race and the environment it occupies. Yet it is not wholly so, for man, being a roving animal, has drifted to the remote corners of the earth from the earliest times in quest of food and land, with the result that a great deal not only of mixing of blood but of interchange of cultural elements has taken place. There are innumerable instances of the borrowing of one or more traits by various peoples throughout the history of man, such as articles of food, use of metals, domesticated animals, methods of agriculture, spread of the alphabet, printing press, etc. So long as the borrowing has been natural and in harmony with the cultural setting and psychological make-up of the people it has been entirely beneficial and even added

to the richness and growth of culture. The introduction of the horse in North America and of terraced cultivation in Assam, to take only two instances, will illustrate our point. The Red Indian tribes of the plains of the United States were not acquainted with the horse before the Europeans brought that animal to America. After learning its use from the Spaniards in the 15th century they adopted it rapidly throughout the country as it fitted in very well with their bison-hunting and nomadic habits and it helped to revolutionize their life so completely that to-day we cannot picture a Red Indian excepting as a superb horseman. Similarly the hill tribes of Assam have from time immemorial tilled their soil with the hoe and never learnt plough cultivation from the people living in the plains. As soon, however, as terraced cultivation was introduced it not only suited the hilly nature of their country but terracing was also found easy with the implements they were accustomed to and was therefore adopted very widely all over the hills.

Similarly in those cases where a blending of cultures has followed from interaction of races or where a transformation of one culture by another was voluntarily effected it has enriched humanity. The efflorescence of Greek civilization was due to the blending of the Hellenic culture with the Cretan, and as is well known Japan transformed her culture in the 7th century by sending a commission to China and incorporating eight out of the eleven main features of Chinese civilization.

When, however, contact has resulted not in peaceful and willing borrowing but in conflict and upsetting of tribal life, the effects have been otherwise. This clash of cultures has come in the wake of political conquest, commercial exploitation and missionary activity, and when the people affected were primitive races the consequences have been disastrous. The Red Indians of America form to-day but small and lowly remnants of the once virile and powerful races due to the short-sighted expansionist policy of the

early European settlers and the same is true of the Australian aborigines with even more tragic results, though now, as in the United States, some wise measures have been taken for their protection. In this country fortunately so far no aboriginal tribe has been forcibly exterminated but certain forces have been found operating which are in the nature of interference with tribal life and are fraught with dangers. The total figure of the aboriginal population in India as enumerated in the Census of 1931 was approximately 20 millions consisting of tribes of several distinct stocks and possessing cultures varying from a simple semi-nomadic to organised sedentary lives. The impact of civilization on them has naturally not been uniform but differs in form as well as in intensity. Speaking generally, however, the effects of contact may be classed under two categories, namely, (1) those which arose out of administrative necessity, and (2) those resulting from commercial exploitation and missionary and educative activities. Under the first head belong the effects of all those regulations and laws whose enforcement was made necessary with the gradual extension of political control over the aboriginal territories. But as these were framed not with reference to the special needs of the tribal population but for the requirements of the people of the plains, their strict application was unsuitable and caused severe hardship on primitive races. Living as they mostly do in forests, subsisting on its produce and the spoils of the chase, the Forest Regulations, Excise and Game Laws have brought in restrictions and prohibitions to which they were unaccustomed, and some of which were even against their customs. For instance, the Forest Laws have taken away the right of disposal of unclassified State forests which are no longer considered as common property of the tribe, and such methods of cultivation as Jhuming or Bewar are disallowed in most parts of India. The Excise and Game Laws in operation do not permit them to distil liquor in their

houses necessary for household consumption and for offerings to their gods or to kill game for sacrificial purposes during the close season. These have not only produced evasion and subterfuges as they have never been able to understand the necessity of these laws, but in limiting their activities have narrowed down the sphere and outflow of their primitive energies for which no substitute has been available. Similarly in their dealings with alien people for administrative purposes and trade, they came against laws totally foreign to them and sometimes antagonistic to their customs. Under his own institutions the primitive man is used to settlement of his debt by accommodation but the sleek moneylender of the plain under the law of usury could sue him in court for non-repayment and succeed in depriving him of his ancestral lands. Even in such a personal affair as marriage, a Bhil, or a Gond does not find himself free to do so according to his tribal customs by capturing the girl, for then he is liable to be punished for abduction. In these and other matters the primitive man has suffered for the unsuitability of the laws and also for the ignorance of tribal customs and life on the part of the trying Judges. The late Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy was so deeply moved when he first came to practise as a lawyer at Ranchi at the hardships suffered by the Munda tribes of Chota Nagpur that he decided as a preliminary to redressing their grievances to learn their languages and institutions. Three of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service, Dr J. H. Hutton and Messrs. J. P. Mills and W. V. Grigson who spent many years in administering primitive races were likewise influenced by this injustice and were chiefly responsible for very wholesome modifications of the laws in their relation to aboriginal people recently adopted by the Government of India.

The effects of commercial intercourse have not likewise been innocuous. Merchants who came to trade in tribal territories did not do so for the love

of the primitive people but solely for making money, and profiting by the innocence and simplicity of the people have succeeded in alienating large portions of their lands by more foul than fair means and caused the ruin of primitive crafts and industries by selling cheap and inferior foreign products. The use of opium and arrack among many tribes such as the Kadars was taught by petty contractors who came to buy the forest produce and in their wake have also come diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis against which the primitive folks did not have any immunity. Such practices as prostitution have in no small measure been due to them and other riff-raff who came in large numbers as a result of improved communications by luring the simple aboriginal girl, unable to distinguish between their own easy-going sexual freedom and a life of organized vice.

The results of missionary and educative activities have been more subtle and affected the psychology of the people more than their outward observances, for even when certain changes in them were attempted it was not so much for the objects themselves as for the mental attitude they implied. The customs and religious rites of primitive races are very closely integrated and deeply rooted in certain beliefs such as soul-matter or the supernatural powers of the Mana and cannot be uprooted without disturbing the whole foundations of their life. Even such practices as head-hunting are not merely cruel savage rites but are in reality fertility cults and intimately associated with their agriculture. These are also the media through which manly virility and physical prowess were encouraged, and as shown by Mills not more than two or three persons were thus annually killed in the Naga hills. Buffalo-hunting therefore, as suggested by some missionaries, is no substitute as buffalo heads do not possess the soul-matter. Similarly the introduction of tea can never take the place of the primitive man's alcoholic beverage either in nutrition or in its



'kick' and can only teach him dishonesty and secret drinking. Similarly the suppression of the annual feasts and dances, during which undoubtedly some sexual licence is permitted, not only discourages their artistic outlet when special dresses and ornaments are worn but also takes away much of the gaiety and joy of primitive life. As investigations into the cause of the depopulation of aboriginal races in Melanesia, Polynesia and Africa by distinguished scientists like Rivers, Elsdon Best and Pitt Rivers have shown, it is the want of interest in life and mental apathy which more than any other cause is responsible for the disintegration of primitive culture. It is a dangerous pastime to save the primitive soul by alien methods and religion, for in such attempts more often than not the primitive man himself disappears. Good intentions are not enough, they have to be tempered with understanding and knowledge. The uplifting of the aborigines by emasculation can never compensate for a vigorous tribal life, even though it is based on different moral and religious standards from those of civilized man.

Surprise is often expressed by zealous reformers as to the possibility of harm to the aboriginal races from association with good Indians. The answer is that really good men, who have no axes of their own to grind, either of a commercial or religious nature, seldom venture into the difficult tribal lands without amenities, but if and when any does come, he, like the late Sarat Chandra Roy or that primitive man's 'big-brother' Verrier Elwin, can certainly do an immense amount of good. For with the march of events and opening up of his country, the primitive man can no longer be completely isolated but all contacts and intercourse with civilization have to be so regulated that he gets a breathing time and sufficient space to adjust himself with the new environment in his own time and in his own way so that the altered conditions do not disintegrate his culture and take away the zest of his life.'

B. S. GUHA

## MORE SANTAL SONGS<sup>1</sup>

### I

O you two boys on the mountain  
Do not split faggots with your axes  
O you two girls  
Do not make bundles of leaves  
On the lower hill  
For the tears will fall  
Will fall from the eyes.

### II

As I was tying leaves, mother  
How the string kept breaking  
I climbed to the fork of a tree  
And it was midnight when I came down.

### III

Under the bushes  
Which two are struggling?  
The girl has caught his chest  
The boy is holding her breasts  
Boy and girl, they rock together.

### IV

Girl, on the cloth for your breasts  
What blood is this?  
Mother, you told me  
To take the buffaloes with the cows  
There was a fight  
Between a cow and a buffalo  
I lent against a *murga*  
It is the blood of the *murga*, mother.

### V

In the field by the spring  
Who loved you so well  
That the ants have all come up?  
My father and brothers  
Had stretched the rope  
And spread the grass  
And shut me in a rice bale.

### VI

We wandered into every jungle  
Through a whole forest we went  
But not a single shameful word you uttered  
Now I am drawing water at the spring  
Why are you tugging at my clothes?  
No, no, I will not let you do it here.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bir Seren, recorded in the Santal Parganas, Bihar, in 1943-44.

## VII

Midnight  
And the *manjhi*'s servant  
The *paramik*'s maid  
Have run away together  
Sound the drums and blow the trumpets  
Like a silk-worm moth in a thicket  
They have linked their lives together.

## VIII

Cutting thatch on the big mountain  
Sister-in-law I am thirsty for water  
Come to the *nala* by the plantain  
In the *nala* with the plantain, boy  
There are many men  
Take me to the spring with the tamarind  
To the spring with the tamarind  
Sister-in-law  
The elder brother went  
Come to the cow-shed at the back of the house.

## IX

My former friend  
Was like a lotus flower  
My friend  
Who was like an *akar* plant  
Is no more  
I keep on thinking of my friend's love.

## X

The rain is drizzling down  
Take me, boy, to the back of the house  
If you care for me only a little, girl  
We need not wait as long.

## XI

Through forest after forest we went  
Through a whole jungle we wandered  
But, my love  
Where did you tell me anything?  
The birds in the jungle  
Are singing from tree to tree  
But, my love, where shall we do it?  
In among the bushes  
We will go, my love  
Into the bushes  
Where not a bird will see.

## XII

The first time  
And she sobbed and sobbed  
But in three days  
She smiled and smiled.

## XIII

If you must have me, take me  
But do not shake me so  
Only because I have no parents  
You are enjoying me like this.

## XIV

My love, the land is dark  
Do not go out for water  
Two handsome young coots  
Are straying down.

## XV

Below the *manjhi*'s pond  
Which is that boy  
With a turban like a basket ?  
Shall I whistle to him  
Or wave my hand  
Oh who is that boy  
With a turban like a basket ?

## XVI

We have had each other and are lying together  
My village lover is rubbing his eyes  
O how shall I go out  
With my husband lying on my clothes ?

## XVII

Under a tree by the rock  
We spread a cloth and loved each other  
Boy, it may only be for now  
It may only be to-day.

## XVIII

At the big river and the stony river  
I am thirsty for water  
I am a grown girl  
I am not a youngster  
O my love  
Do not shake my body.

## XIX

Like a creeper falling  
And water  
Swilling from a cup  
My friend went quickly away.

## XX

The earth and trees  
Are cut with mattock and axe  
But who will stand beneath his tree ?  
Village headman, you are my father  
Let the *jaher* tree stand up again.

## XXI

Friend, we have left going  
To the rice field in the jungle  
They have given you a wife  
They have found for me a husband  
O my friend when we meet now  
We must never flutter our eyebrows  
Or show the teeth in our mouths.

## XXII

Beneath a mango, my friend  
Was playing on his flute  
Beneath a tamarisk he sang  
But a python took him  
Do not cry, my love  
Do not mourn  
In your friend's place  
I will get a *juri* for you.

## XXIII

You by the big rock  
I at the end of the village  
How shall I know if you are there  
With the little finger of your left hand  
Give a loud whistle  
And I shall know that you are there.

## XXIV

Because of you  
They nag at me in the house  
I should give up talking to you  
Oh the creeper on the tree  
Like a tree's creeper  
My mind is tied to you, my love.

## XXV

You in the house  
And I by the river  
How shall I know you, my love ?  
Stand on the bank of the river  
And sound your flute  
And when I hear it, I shall come, my love.

# THE PLOUGH PUNISHMENT

BY SHAMRAO HIVALE

ALTHOUGH women are permitted to use the plough in certain other aboriginal areas such as Bastar, there is a strict taboo on their using or even touching it in Mandla. The result is that the association of women with the plough acquires a magical significance which can sometimes be put to important use. The best known use of this kind is where at a time of serious failure of rain, two young naked girls are yoked to a plough at night. They are driven across a field down to the nearest stream and pelted with cow-dung. To save themselves, they duck under the water and scream, 'It will rain.' It is believed that this is an infallible means of bringing rain.

The plough, however, is also used for the purpose of domestic discipline and a number of instances have recently come to my notice of angry men punishing idle or unfaithful women by yoking them along with a bullock to a plough and driving them round a field. For example, Rajpal, a Pardhan of Bitanpur, made his son Tara plough with his daughter-in-law. The reason in this case was the girl's idleness. When the father and son ploughed in the fields the girl always brought their food late. One day the old man lost his temper and said to his son, 'This wife of yours knows very well how tired we get and how our backs grow loose with the work we have to do. She does not bring the food from her own father's house. Now take her by her hair and put her in the plough.' At first the boy refused but the father threatened to beat him and so he tied the girl to one side of the plough and drove her round the field.

Another incident of the same kind occurred in the life of a very notorious young woman whom I will call Adri. She was a famous singer and dancer and would spend night after night dancing with the young men of her village. For this she was beaten time and again but nothing cured her. After a number of matrimonial adventures she married a Gond youth who was madly in love with her. He was of course excommunicated for marrying a Pardhan girl but he gladly gave up his parents and relatives and all his possessions for her sake. But even then he found that Adri was very troublesome. One day an old lover who had joined the army came on leave and when Adri saw him in his uniform she completely lost her head. She went to his village telling her husband that she was visiting her mother's house, and danced there with him for the whole night. She returned home early next morning and cooking her husband's food in a great hurry carried it out to him in the field. 'Eat this as quickly as you can, for my mother has sent for me to go to her house.' 'But I thought you had already spent all night in your mother's house. I am not going to let you go again.' Adri, however, took no notice and

began to go down the path to her mother's village. But her husband had heard about his military rival and he unyoked one of his buffaloes and running after the girl, caught her and tied her to the plough. Then he drove her across the field, pricking her with his ox-goad. The girl's screams, however, brought the boy's elder brother to the scene and he untied the girl and made peace.

On one occasion I witnessed the actual scene where an angry Pardhan husband who was in my employment, exasperated by the infidelities of his wife, took her to a lonely field and treated her in the same manner. It is evidently not a light punishment, for, apart from the indignity, the cow or bullock with whom the girl is yoked seems to resent its unusual companion, and on this occasion it plunged about wildly and there was, it seemed to me, real danger the girl's neck might be broken.

It is not only, however, the romantic and rather passionate Pardhans who have this custom. It is not unknown also among the slow-moving, placid Gonds. Thus, Rusali had three wives, who were always quarrelling with each other; the eldest wife particularly tormented the two younger women and one day she did so with such effect that no one would cook the food. The husband was down working in the field and at last the eldest wife prepared something and took it to him. She was so late that in fury he yoked her to his plough and made her go twice round the field, pricking her with his goad all the way. Then he took her home and made her cook a proper meal. It is said that after this there were no more troubles in the family and the wives became friends with each other.

Another Gond, Bisdokara, had a wife who was in love with another man. In the month of May at a time of great heat, Bisdokara told his young wife to get him some water and bring it to him in the field, where he was ploughing. The girl's lover was drinking liquor that morning and he sent for the girl who joined him and began to drink also. She entirely forgot about her husband's order until a friend came running and told her that he was waiting full of anger down in the field. She was by now almost drunk but she managed to stagger down to the field with a pot of water. When Bisdokara had been told what his wife had been doing, and angry both at her relation with her lover and her failure to bring him water, he unyoked his favourite bullock and drawing her to the plough, tied her in its place. Then with his goad, he drove her round the field. She cried, 'What is the matter with you? Have you gone mad?' He said, 'Don't speak to me, you widow, you don't weep when your lover pierces you. Why should you weep when I prick you with my goad?' The peasants from the neighbouring fields came running and rescued the girl.

An even more dramatic incident occurred in Lalpur. Here one Munshi Bhoi was an important Gond landlord and to show his dignity he had five wives, all of whom lived together happily. The four younger women used to work in the fields and the eldest cooked. But one day the Bhoi fell in love with the wife of an Ahir and, being rich and important, engaged her to fetch water in his house. The wives were very annoyed at this and one day they managed to catch the girl in their husband's room and beat her. They planned to get her excommunicated by the Ahirs but the woman's husband heard of it and took her away to another village. The Bhoi was naturally enraged at this and he took all his five wives down to his field, tied them to a plough and drove them across it all together.

It will be seen that the offences for which the plough punishment is most usually administered are those of infidelity, domestic quarrel or slackness in taking food or water to the weary ploughman in his field. The last cause is a very natural one, for the ploughman has his plough ready at hand and it is easy to fall into the temptation of using it. There was one other case where the ploughing was less of a punishment than a means of protection against the broken taboo. A Panka woman told me how, when she was a little girl of about fourteen she went once to her grandfather's field while he was ploughing. The old man was seated over a pipe while the plough stood nearby, with the bullocks yoked. The little girl was very mischievous and she took hold of the plough and began to drive it. The old man was aghast, for he believed that if any woman touched a plough in the field there would be a famine. To avert the danger he tied the child to the plough and drove her along for a few paces.

This form of punishment is not approved. In Rajpal's case the parents of his daughter-in-law took her away and he himself had to give a penalty feast. Afterwards he found it difficult to get a bride for his younger son. It is said that when he went to ask for girls in betrothal, he used to receive the reply: 'Others earn their living by bullocks but you use your own daughter-in-law and we will not give our daughter for that.' The Gonds generally take at least one rupee worth of liquor as a fine for the panchayat after a case of yoking, and in the case of the landlord with his five wives it is said that immediately afterwards his fate deteriorated and he was driven to a course of action that sent him to jail for a year and brought about his early death.



# SOME MUNDA RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND THEIR SYSTEM OF RECKONING TIME

BY M. B. BHADURI

As is the case with all aboriginal tribes, the Mundas of Chota Nagpur did not develop any proper system of reckoning time. Prominent heavenly bodies like the Sun and Moon and their movements roused their curiosity but the annual solar cycles did not stimulate their minds to anything beyond the broad fact of the change of seasons into the Summer, Rainy and Winter months. The attendant physical and natural changes also they did not fail to observe and these phenomena also entered into their system of calculation of time. Some of the stars and groups of stars they imbued with life and myths grew up around them and these also were connected with the changing seasons.

Thus, the Mundas divide the year into three seasons: the *jete sa* (hot weather), the *jargida* (rainy season), the *rabang sa* (cold season). The advent of summer is signalized by the blossoming of the *sal* (*shorea robusta*), and this is called by them the *baha chandu* (flower month) from the fact that all nature springs into new life and flowers abound everywhere. According to the Mundas, the presiding group of stars of the *jete sa* (hot season) is the *parkom kumru ipil* (bedstead-thief-star) by which name the constellation of the Great Bear is known to them. This resurrection of life on earth is celebrated by the Mundas by the Baha festival or Sarhul festival in which their Pahan or village priest plays the principal rôle. The *jargida* (rainy season) is said to be presided over by the galaxy of nebulous stars, the Milky Way, called by the Mundas the *Gai hora* (the path of the cows) because it is believed that the dust raised by the cows is said to send down rains on earth. The *jargida* is foreshadowed by the advent of what they call 'nirbisi' (from *nir*—to fly away, and *bisi*—poison), when, it is believed, all poisons of the earth are dried up. This period is indicated, according to them, by the drying up of the leaves of the *garahathna* (Arjun tree). The horns of deer are said to dry up and the snakes shed their skins at this period, when the Mundas suspend ploughing and sowing for the time. It is significant that this period roughly coincides with the period from about the 7th of June to the 20th of June, when the Sun is in the constellation Mirga Sira which the Hindu neighbours of the Mundas mispronounce as *nirbisra*. It appears that the Mundas borrowed the word 'nirbisi' from *nirbisra* and gave it a meaning in their own way and associated it with their own ideas.

The principal religious ceremony of the Mundas in the *jargida* is the *Kadleta* ceremony, that is, worship of the field spirit. No transplantation of paddy may be done by any villager until the *pahan* has performed the *Kadleta* ceremony, which takes place about the first or second week of July. Some Mundas who are in

closer touch with their Hindu neighbours associate this period with what they call "*adra*" (wet) when wet cultivation or *lewa* (sowing in mud) must be done. As a matter of fact the Sun is in the constellation *ardra* (Betelgeuse) up to about the 8th of July.

Another religious festival of the *jargida* is the *Karma* or *Karam* in which the branch of the *Karam* tree (*Adina Cardifolia*) is planted in the ground and there is all night dancing and singing round it. This takes place on the 11th day of the full moon of the Hindi month of *Bhadra* which corresponds to the date fixed for the Hindu festival *Parswa Ekadasi*. It may be noted that this is only one of the very few religious ceremonies of the Mundas for which there is a fixed point of time. The wide prevalence and popularity of the *Karam* festival among the aborigines other than the Mundas, however, indicate that it is not of Hindu origin, although the fact of its fixed time of observance indicates some loan of Hindu ideas. The *Ind* festival is generally observed on the day following the *Karam* festival, but the time for it is not always fixed. The *karwa jom* festival (first eating festival) is observed when the early paddy is ripe, and there is no fixed point of time for the observance of this festival.

The end of the *jargida* synchronizes with the *Dasai* festival—which is of course not a Munda festival—but they join in the festivities of their Hindu neighbours. The next festival is the *Sohrai* festival, which is widely observed by the Mundas and Oraons. This festival appears to be indigenous, although the name *Sohrai* is derived from the word *Shroa* that is, the 16th day after the *Dasai* full moon, on which day the festival is celebrated. The spirit presiding over cattle is worshipped on this occasion.

The *rabangsa* (cold season) is presided over by the *har juait ipil* (plough—ploughshare star) or Orion. The religious festival of this season is the *khara puja* or the ceremony of worshipping the threshing floor.

Having given an account of the Munda division of time into the three seasons, I shall now briefly describe their further division of time into months. *Chandu* is the Mundari word for moon as well as month. They must have observed the lunations side by side with the change of seasons. The Mundari month extends from one new moon to another new moon. Before they had borrowed any ideas from foreigners, they had simple names of their own to indicate some of the prominent months. Thus the first month of the *jete sa*, they named *Baha chandu* or the month in which the *Baha* festival (flower festival) is celebrated and in which all trees are in flower. Towards the end of the *Baha chandu*, they look for other natural signs, e.g., when the Keond (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) ripens it is the time of the commencement of sowing and so it is called *Hero chandu* (sowing month). When the *jilhur*

tree blossoms and the atmosphere is smoky in appearance it is *Jete chandu*, (hot month). Borrowing from their Hindu neighbours, some of them call this period as the advent of Rohin when early sowing must be completed. *Rohin* is the Hindi word for the star *Rohini* (Aldebaran). The sun enters this constellation about the 26th of May. The next month is called *jargi*, the rains, when the rainy season (or *jargida*) begins—when wet cultivation must be done. The month following this is called the *Gurlu aghan chandu* (the Aghan or ripening and harvesting month of the Gurlu crop—*Hindi Gundli* or *Kheri*—*Panicum miliare*). The next month is known by the name of *Ind chandu* (the month of the Ind festival). It is also called *Gora aghan chandu* (the month when *gora* or early paddy ripens and is harvested). The next month has no specific Munda name, but it is called *Dasai chandu* after the name of the prevailing Hindu festival, *Dasai* or *Dassera*. The following month is called *Sohrai chandu* which begins with the Amawas or new moon after the Dasai full moon, and is named after the Sohrai festival. After this month, comes the harvesting month which has no specific name, except that of the Hindi name Aghan. As I have indicated, the word Aghan is connected by the Mundas with the ripening and harvesting of crops, this word has obliterated any specific Munda name for the month that might have been possibly coined by the Mundas for this month, in which they perform the worship of the threshing floor (*khara puja*). After Aghan comes the month known as *Pus chandu*. This month has also no specific Mundari name. The Mundas have a superstitious practice of avoiding this month for any auspicious ceremony. The origin of this is unknown. It may be due to the extreme coldness of the weather and the shortness of the day, coupled with the busy work that they have to do during this month. So they have banned all ceremonies and religious festivals during this month.

After *Pus* (with the Mundas, the month of *Pus* ends with the new moon of the Hindi month of *Pus*) comes the month of *Mage*, which consists of the bright half of the Hindi month of *Pus* and the dark half of the Hindi month of *Magh*. On the full moon day which falls in the middle of this month (it corresponds to the *pus purnima* of the Hindus) the Mundas celebrate the *mage parab* when the spirits of dead ancestors are worshipped, and the new year of the Mundas begins after this. A period of festivities follows and fairs are held. The bondsmen (*dhangars*) are free, until they voluntarily enter into fresh contracts for the new year by a formal ceremony. This month is also called *Buru chandu* because fairs are held during this month. The Mundari word *buru* means a hill. As fairs used to be generally held on hill tops in the Munda country, the word *buru* came to mean a fair also. The *pahan* or priest

performs the *buru puja* in this month. No Munda may eat *urid* (broken pulse) *simbi* (bean), *bhata* (brinjal) and raw chillies till the *mage buru puja* is performed. Nor can they cut any thatching grass (*sauri*) till this *puja* is over. They rigidly observe this, as they believe that if they violate any of these injunctions, the village will be disturbed by the depredations of tigers and snakes and the *pahan* will be specially subject to these visitations.

The year of the Mundas begins with the month of what they call *Gola mage chandu* which consists of the second half of the Hindi month of *Magh* and the first half of the Hindi month of *Phagun*. The *dhangars* for the new year must take admission within this month, after the round of festivities, mirth and merriment, during the few days of the previous month which marks the end of the year, when they are free men. The month of *gola mage* is followed by the month called *phagu chandu* (evidently a borrowed Hindi name). In this month, the Mundas visit the *jair sarna* or sacred grove and perform *puja* there and then go about for a hunt (*Sendra*). They then cut a branch of the *edel daru* (Hindi *Sema-Bambax Malabari-cuim*) and a branch of the *jara daru* or Castor plant (*Palma christi*) and collect *kher* or *sauri* (thatching grass) from each house. The *kher* is then tied to the branch. The *pahan* then performs *puja* there and sets fire to it. When the branch is fully ablaze, the boys cut down the branch with axes. This is called the cutting down of the '*phag*'; hence, the name of the month is *Phagu chandu*. From this period, and until the *baha puja* is performed a *pahan* may not eat mahua, urid and beans nor can he eat on plates of *sal* leaves.

Besides the lunations, they observe some of the other characteristic natural phenomena connected with the moon. When the moon has an umbra, they consider the moon to be sitting with her courtiers, which they express by saying *chandu dubkiako* (the moon is sitting with her companions). An eclipse of the sun or the moon they explain by saying that at some remote time, the sun and moon had occasion to stand security for the poor men on earth who obtained on credit some *Dom tunki* (baskets made by the Doms). They did not return the baskets nor pay the price. So the Doms (the heavenly counterparts of the terrestrial Doms) periodically approach the sun and moon for repayment, and when this happens, the sun or the moon blush or turn black out of shame (*Giu te hende tana*). So, when an eclipse takes place, the Doms move about from house to house and make collections of offerings of rice and paddy which the householders offer to them, repeating the following incantation: *Ae au ledae tunki, enara gonong ing om jada, ara tai me*. (He brought the tunki, its price I am giving, so release him). It is believed that as a result of this, the sun or the moon is released by the Doms and the eclipse is at an end.

The myths of the Birhors (a tribe of the Munda race) is a variant of the same story but less ingenious and imaginative. The following is the myth of the Birhors as given by Roy in his monograph on *The Birhors*.<sup>1</sup>

'As for the causes of the eclipses of the sun and the moon, these luminaries, Birhor myths tell us, stood security for the debts of poor men. The creditors now and again send Chaprassis or bailiffs to arrest the sun and the moon for the debts of those for whom they stood security. When the sun or the moon is thus seized by the bailiff and there is a struggle, the luminary concerned is for a while partly or totally concealed from view and we call it a solar eclipse or a lunar eclipse as the case may be. On the occasion of a lunar eclipse a Birhor strikes two iron implements against each other three times, apparently to scare away the poor bailiffs, and then exposes the iron implements in the open. Later, these implements are given to a blacksmith who makes them into bracelets and anklets to be worn on the arms and legs of children to protect them from the evil attentions of spirits and to ward off bad dreams.'

*Sing Bonge* is the Supreme God of the Mundas. He is the Creator and the Sun God. His abode is in heaven. The Mundari word *sirma* means the heaven, the sky, as well as the year. The word *singi* means the day as well as the hour of the day. The Mundari ideas of the past, present and future can be traced from the words they use in their speech. They have a vague idea of a beginning of time and creation which they signify by the word *munu*. The eternity of time is also vaguely expressed by the word *jaejug* or *janao janao* which means 'for ever' 'always' as well as from 'generation to generation'. The hoary past they express by the words *nag ko paria*. The cycle of the year, they signify by the word *sirma ruar ruar* which means annually. They have specific words to mean 'this year' 'last year' 'year before last' 'three years ago' as well as 'next year' and 'two years hence' etc.; and for other time counts, they use ordinary numerals.

As regards the division of days of the month, they have no names for the week days, but they use the names of the Hindu week days. They have specific names for the new moon, the full moon and third day after the new moon, as well as for to-day, to-morrow, day after to-morrow, yesterday, day before yesterday. The smallest division of time is expressed by the word *pal* or *rapid* which means a moment or the twinkling of an eye. They have specific names for the division of the hours of the day and the night. *Sim ko ra re* is the time of the cock-crow or 4 a.m. *Artang Singi* means twilight, just before sunrise, *ango dipli* is sunrise time. *Seta* is morning.

<sup>1</sup> S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), p. 495.

*Mid dang singi* (one *dang* Sun) is 7 a.m., *Landia tikin* (lazy man's noon, that is, the time when the lazy workers leave their field) is about 10 a.m. *Tikin* is midday, *Tarsingi* is about 3 p.m. *Da basang singi* (time when water is boiled for cooking the night meal) is about 4 p.m., *Ayub-ayub* is about 5 p.m., and *singi ayub* is sunset or evening. For the hours of the night (*nida*) they have very little division of time as they did not feel the necessity of it. Thus, *tala nida* means midnight and *ding nida* means the latter part of the night.

I have indicated the division into twelve periods of the year according to the Mundas, and have also stated that the Mundari month is counted from one new moon to another new moon. This would create a difficulty as there are sometimes variations of the number of lunations in a solar year. Of course, the Mundas could not be expected to be able to discover and adjust this problem of intercalary months. But somehow or other, they make up this defect by depending upon their *Baha Chandu*, which sometimes extends indefinitely until the Baha (or flower) festival is celebrated throughout the Munda country (there is no fixed point of date for the observance of this festival).

I close this short paper with a brief account of the auspiciousness or otherwise of the twelve months, so far as marriage festivities are concerned as described by a Munda in his own language.

(i)  
*Baha chandu kabua*—We don't allow marriage in the Baha month.

(ii)  
*Hero chandu re bu bapla arandia*—We perform our marriage, in the Hero-Chandu.

(iii)  
*Jete chandu marang hon inga kaing omea*—In the Jete Chandu, the eldest child will not be given in marriage.

(iv)  
*Jargi re ome aing*—In the Jargi month I will give (in marriage).

(v)  
*Gurlu sa re here roa tainoka ne kalom arandi kabua. Soben koa hangama taina. Isu dukeren da taiomie do ka namoa*—For the Gurlu month there is sowing and transplantation, so we do not marry. All are busy. The rains are precious and if we let them slip we won't get them afterwards.

(vi)  
*Ind chandu re arandi kabua*—We don't marry in the Ind Chandu.

(vii)  
*Dasai—Schnai, Aghan re bu arandia*—We marry in the months of Dasai, Sohrai and Aghan.

(viii)  
*Pus ren kuri aulire phus nira ko*—If we bring a wife in Pus—it will be phas phus and she will fly away.

(ix)  
*Mage ren kuri ini do kula heke, en kuri jojoma*—A wife obtained in Mage-month is a tiger. She will eat her husband up.

(x)  
*Phagun chandu enate bu bapla*—In the Phagun month we marry.

# THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD IN SANTAL SOCIETY

BY W. G. ARCHER

## I

### INTRODUCTION

AMONG the tribes of Middle and Eastern India, the bastard or illegitimate child is so scarce that in many monographs its possibility is not even considered. In *The Kharias*, *The Birhors* and *The Mundas*, Sarat Chandra Roy makes no mention of the problem, while in *The Oraons*, after discussing pre-marital relations, he adds 'Such companionship seldom ends in marriage. Marriage between boys and girls of the same clan is strictly prohibited, and even when the boy and the girl are of different clans, a marriage between a boy and a girl of the same village is not considered desirable. Community of clan is, however, (in practice though not in theory) often no bar to pre-marital intercourse. Cases of abortion, though they seldom come to light, are not rare. To prevent conception, an Oraon maiden either reverses her loin-cloth for the nonce by wearing it with its front side to the back or ties to her loin-cloth just over the abdomen the false plait of hair sometimes worn as a coiffure. When, notwithstanding such precautions, inconvenient consequences follow such pre-marital connexion, the girl is given a glass or two of *phuli* or mahua liquor to drink, and this, it is said, generally serves to cause abortion. If, however, this fails of the desired effect, the help of a *Kusrain* or midwife, generally of the Ghasi caste, is sought to cause abortion through medicines. In a very few cases, this course is not adopted, but either the affair ends in a marriage if the boy and the girl belong to different clans; or, if they happen to belong to the same clan, they live together as husband and wife. In the latter case, the young man has to provide a feast to his co-villagers to legalise the union and avoid excommunication. Sons by such a marriage inherit their father's property.<sup>1</sup>

In his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Dalton gives a similar testimony.

'Long and strong attachments between young (Oraon) couples are common. Dhumkuria lads are no doubt great flirts, but each has a special favourite amongst the young girls of his acquaintance and the girls well know to whose touch or pressure in the dance each maiden's heart is responsive. Liaisons between boys and girls of the same village seldom end in marriage. Yet, whilst hardly ever failing to present their husbands with a pledge of love after marriage, instances of illegitimate births are rare though young Oraon girls remain unmarried for some years after reaching maturity.'<sup>2</sup>

1. S. C. Roy, *The Oraons* (Ranchi, 1915), p. 247-8.

2. E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 248.

The problem is equally absent among the Maria Gonds of Bastar. W. V. Grigson states that if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, the girl states the name of the man responsible and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). If the child is born without even *ottur* it is considered as belonging to its father's clan and the father is expected to take the mother and the child to his house, the union being known to Hill Marias as *ahene hattu* ('thus went'). Grigson adds that 'no stigma attaches to such unions and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.' He does not state what happens if the father declines but it is obvious from his account that such refusals are unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Baiga, Verrier Elwin has described the position as follows: 'Illegitimate children are almost unknown among the Baiga. There is in any case no stigma attached to bastardy. The names *bhula* for the child and *bhuli* for the mother are only given when the father is not known and when no other man is willing to accept the responsibility for the paternity. This happens very rarely. In his long life Mahatu can remember only one example.

The *bhula* child suffers from no disabilities. "I would marry my daughter to him," says Mahatu, "we do not think him bad. It was his mother who was bad. But she too did nothing."

When the mother marries and has other children, the *bhula* child has almost equal rights with them. If it is a boy, he can inherit, and shares with the other brothers, but he gets a little less than they do.

No bastard figures in many of the myths, legends or songs and the word is not used in Baiga *gali*.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the *lamsena* or serving son-in-law is a common Baiga way of disguising a bastard and absorbing him into society.

"Sometimes if the *lamsena* is old enough and the girl is willing, they are married first and the boy does his work later. This is done when the girl is suspected of an intrigue with someone, or when she is made pregnant by an unknown lover. The *lamsena* is the official refuge of the unmarried mother. His duty is to save a girl's reputation."<sup>2</sup>

This apparent absence of a problem is also true of Santals, and Campbell writing in 1915 went so far as to declare that 'no illegitimate children are born into the Santal community.' He added, 'Unless an unmarried woman can indicate the putative

1. W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (Oxford, 1938), p. 248.

2. Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1940), p. 288.



father of her unborn child, she is outcasted, never to be restored, and her child shares the same fate. The ingenuity of the Santals has evolved a form of marriage whereby all children of Santal parentage are legitimatised. If the man and woman cannot be married according to Santal law, a husband is provided for the woman, and he assumes the responsibilities of father of the child, who is considered legitimate and entitled to all the privileges thereof.<sup>1</sup>

As a summary, this statement is nearly but not entirely correct, and I will now examine the problem as it exists among the Santals and describe the ways in which they approach it.<sup>2</sup>

## II

### ABORTION

The first and most obvious check on Santal bastardy is abortion. This is by no means uncommon, and the stock Santal term for a girl who has had a child outside marriage includes the case of a girl who has miscarried. She is *cupi cadwi*, a pot with a cracked base. Her status is better than an ordinary *cadwi*, a girl who has been divorced. She can still be married as a *dangua*, an unmarried girl, and she can still receive *sindur* at her wedding. But her status is slightly lower.

A number of *Bir Seren* refer quite openly to abortion.

## I

O my love  
My mind has broken  
For the spring has ceased its flow'  
In the gully by the plantain  
Drink cups of medicine  
Swallow down some pills  
Like a black cow  
That has never had a calf  
You will again be neat and trim.

1. A. Campbell, 'Rules of Succession and Partition of Property as observed by the Santals', J. B. O. R. S., Vol. I (1915), p. 23.

2. I have based my account on personal enquiries during tours throughout the Santal Parganas in 1943 and 1944 as well as on cases which came to me as Deputy Commissioner. Mr. S. M. Naqavi kindly supplied me with the Nipania and Dhanbad examples and confirmed custom in the Mahabharat and Taljhari bungalows of Rajmahal and the Ramgarh circle of Dumka while I owe the Madgawa and Monglapara cases to Father Cauche, S.J. I have also had the advantage of notes from Father J. Portelli and Father Grech confirming custom in the Telo Bungalow (Rajmahal Damin) and the Pakaur police station, respectively. For certain detailed information I am indebted to Mr. K. N. Sahay, Mr. Stephen Murmu, Sibū Hansdak' and Lakhan Hansdak'.

## II

In a lucky month  
The child was born  
And so my love  
It did not live.

## III

Like a bone  
Was the first child born  
And the white ants have eaten it  
O *juri*, do not weep  
Oh do not mourn  
We two are here  
And the white ants have eaten it.

## IV

In the unploughed field, elder brother  
The vultures hover  
O elder brother  
It is a dead cow or a dead buffalo  
At midnight the *manjhi*'s second daughter  
Rid herself of a child.

## V

The field has not been ploughed  
The field is full of sand  
Little grandson  
Why do you linger?  
From a still unmarried girl  
A two months child has slipped  
And that is why they stare.

## VI

In the unploughed field beneath the palm tree  
Uncle, what birds are hovering?  
The kites and vultures hover  
The child of an unmarried girl  
They are tearing into shreds.

## VII

In the unploughed rice field, elder brother  
What birds are hovering?  
At midnight, the *manjhi*'s middle daughter  
Has taken it away  
They are tearing the after-birth to pieces.

## VIII

You by the village street  
I by the path in the *bari*

We will take the child away  
 To the right is a bent *baru*  
 To the left is a *jamun* stump  
 O my love  
 We will bury it between them.

## IX

East, west, north, south  
 Tell me in which river  
 We shall put away the child  
 With rotting thatch below it  
 And jungly silk above  
 We will have it put away  
 You at the lower *ghat*  
 I at the upper  
 We will wash and go to our homes  
 You by the lower path  
 I by the upper  
 We will go to our homes.

Moreover, although methods of abortion are neither openly nor widely known various *jan-gurus* and old women are believed to possess recipes and methods and when a situation requires it, there is never any difficulty in securing advice. One method is to take a little *jormohol* root 'no more than a pice' and drink it down on a night with no moon. Another is to take a similar quantity of the root of *rajbaha* or oleander. Opium or *hin* (*asafoetida*) can also be drunk and abortion will result. A different type of method is to introduce a root into the vagina as a chemical explosive. The root of the *bir kitauri*, a jungle plant, a little like sugarcane and with red flowers, is taken. The root must be as long as six fingers are broad and must be pushed into the vagina until it touches the uterus. It has to stay in place for six hours 'from morning to noon' and a thread is tied round it to prevent it from working into the womb. 'If it enters the womb the girl dies.' The root of the *caulia* bush (*Ruellia saffruticosa*) can also be used. This is pushed into the womb 'until it touches the bag. The bag bursts and blood and a half-formed child come out.' This can be tried only in the first five months. 'After that, there is pain and trouble.' A third variant is the root of the *mota catom arak* (*Oxalis corniculata*). There are two plants of this name and the thicker variety known as *tandi* is employed. A final method is to tie a thread to the leg of a *ghugri* or mole cricket. The cricket is put into the cunnus. 'It crawls to the womb and tears its skin. Blood comes and after the blood, the child.' The method is possible only in the first three months and 'if the thread snaps or comes off and the cricket goes into the womb, the girl dies.' It is evident,

therefore, that if a girl wishes to rid herself of a child, there are no insuperable difficulties.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that every unmarried girl attempts abortion. The main circumstance in which abortion is tried is when a girl is pregnant and the boy is debarred from marrying her. He may possibly be a boy of her own sept or a relation by marriage—a brother's son or an uncle. He may even be a Diku, a Kamar boy, a Paharia. In such cases, discovery will mean complete outcasting or *billaha*. A marriage with him will be out of the question. The actual father will never be accepted as the legal father. Abortion is then the only way and it is significant that in all the *billahas* that occurred in the last five years I have not heard of one in which the guilty woman was pregnant.

### III

#### MARRIAGE

Abortion is at most a check. It is not always successful and it is not always tried. A girl may hope that her boy will marry her and she may let her pregnancy develop until the child is born.

#### I

Mirza, you had and had me  
And now a boy is born  
O my love  
Wait and hear  
The name of the boy.

#### II

'Grandmother, a pain  
Is twitching in me'  
'At the back of the house  
You had too good a time  
You were full of your bed  
And so your trouble came'  
'I will rear the child  
If one will share his sept.'

As soon, therefore, as a girl is visibly pregnant and the news of her condition spreads through the village, her parents question her about it, and the matter goes to the *jog-manjhi* or village proctor.

In Silingi village when Melco Marandi became pregnant, the *jog-manjhi* or village proctor said to her, 'Your parents tell me you are not looking the same. Have you got anything?'. 'Yes, I have found something.' 'Where did you get it.' 'From a boy of the *paranik's*.' 'Why did you do it?' 'He said we would keep each other.' 'How many months?' 'Two.'

The *jog-manjhi* then interviews the boy and a village council sits to settle the matter.

If the boy accepts the paternity and agrees to marry the girl, the solution is fairly simple. He pays a fee or fine of two *khasis* (castrated goats) to the *manjhi* or headman, the *pon* or bride price to the father and the girl goes to his house. She becomes his wife by *or ader* or pulling in. While the child is in the womb a *dol bapla* or full dress wedding is forbidden, but once the child has been born, a *dol bapla* can proceed and the girl can be lifted in the basket and given *sindur*. There is only one qualification. The baby itself must not be present at the wedding. It cannot enter the basket with its mother. This *dol bapla* is at most a celebration of their union and the *sindur* is merely a way of qualifying the girl to help her husband in the service of his *bongas*. She is equally married by *or ader* and it is the act of living with the boy with village approval or acquiescence, that gives her the status of a wife.

In such cases, the fact that the child is born in marriage nullifies the fact that conception occurred outside it. The child is no different from any child conceived and born months after a wedding.

## IV

## THE BIRTH CEREMONY

Not every boy, however, agrees to marry, and in certain cases the father is unknown. In such circumstances, the child may be born out of marriage and the birth ceremony by which it enters a family will be in danger. This ceremony of *nim dak' mandi* I will now briefly describe.

When a Santal is born in a Santal house, the village becomes impure and information must at once be sent to the *naeke* or village priest. The *naeke* impersonates the village on its ghostly side and is the means by which it senses its pollution. When the news reaches him, he at once goes out and bathes. With the news, oil is also sent but if the child's father is unknown, the *naeke* says 'In whose name can I wash?' He then refuses the oil and washes for an unknown child. But if the father is known he washes in water and rubs himself with oil 'in the name of the father and the child.' This rids him of his personal pollution and the naming makes clear the impurity from which he is absolved. When this is done he can again take food. Later, on the third or fifth day, the owner of the house summons the villagers<sup>1</sup> and the ritual of *nim dak' mandi* is held.

In this ceremony, there are five essential participants—the *naeke*, the child's mother and father, the midwife and the child

---

1. The summoning is by the owner and not by the *godet*. If a birth occurs during the ten days of *Sohrae*, only the *naeke* and *manjhi* attend and only they and the child's father have flour put on their chests.

itself. If the *naeke* is absent the *kudum naeke* or the *naeke's* son officiates. And if these are also absent, either a villager acts as a *naeke* by proxy or a dummy *naeke* is made by planting a stick in the ground. Without the *naeke's* presence—whether factual or symbolic—the ceremony cannot go on. Similarly, the child's parents must attend and if the known father is absent, the girl's father, a relative or a proxy must act as substitute.

The ceremony begins with the shaving of the *naeke*. This is done by a villager who is made the barber. After this, the *manjhi* and the other villagers are shaved, and finally, the child's father. When this has been done the barber shaves the child, carefully collects the hair in a leaf-cup, pours some oil in it and gives it to the midwife. The men then go to a tank for bathing and the *naeke* is the first to take a bath.

While they are away the midwife takes the arrow which cut the umbilical cord, winds two threads of cotton round it, takes the leaf-cup with the hair and goes with the women for bathing. At the *ghat* she makes marks of *sindur* on the ground and then 'buys the *ghat*' by putting the child's hair and a thread in the water and letting them float away. The women bathe and go back to the house and the midwife then soaks the other thread in *haldi* and ties it round the child's waist.

The mother now sits on the verandah with the child in her lap and some *atnak*' leaves in her hand. The midwife mixes cowdung in water and lets it trickle into the left hand of the mother. The mother dabs it on her head and sips a little. After that the child is taken inside.

The midwife then makes a thin white paste from rice flour and puts it in three leaf-cups. She first marks the chest of the *naeke* from the first cup and then the other villagers in the order of shaving. She ends with the child's father. When the men are finished she begins with the *naeke's* wife and marks the other women in the same order as their husbands.

The child is then formally named. Its sept is always that of its father and if the marriage is not in *ghar jawae* form, a first son is always given its first name after its father's father and a girl after its father's mother. When the known father boycotts the ceremony, the name is decided by the girl and her father.

The midwife then comes out and announces the name. She salutes the *naeke*, and after that the other villagers. Rice is boiled with *nim* leaves and the village drinks the rice and *nim* water. With the end of the ceremony, the village *bongas* or spirits are purified and the village as a whole is cleansed. The child is now part of a family and has a father.

## V

## THE UNMARRIED MOTHER AND THE KNOWN FATHER

For a boy who agrees to marry a girl, the ceremony of *nim dak' mandi* offers little embarrassment. The child is shaved in his name, he gives it his sept and in fact the situation is the same as if the child had been conceived in wedlock.

While accepting the paternity, however, a boy may refuse to marry the girl. Prem Kumar Murmu who was the son of Sarkar Murmu, the *desh-manjhi* of Kusma, admitted before the village that he had made Kapru Tudu pregnant. But his father who was a rich Santal was against the marriage. So under his father's instigation he refused to marry her.

Similarly, the boy may deny the paternity but the village may hold his paternity to be proved. Bale Hembrom of Bordaha (Alubera) carried on with Pandlo Tudu of his village for a year. He met her first in the jungle and then came to her almost every night and slept in her house. After a few months, Pandlo became pregnant and Bale then hurriedly married another girl. The matter was referred to the *jog-manjhi* and although Bale denied the connection, it was common knowledge and the village overruled him.

In both these circumstances, the village requires the boy to maintain the girl during the later stages of the pregnancy from the date the village meets to the time the child is born. He must also compensate her for suckling the baby. After that he either takes the child into his house or goes on maintaining it. He must also pay the girl's father a full bride-price as well as *bare itat*, the brother's bullock. When the girl can work again she gets no further maintenance and must keep herself.

On the social side, the known father is accepted as the real father and at the *nim dak' mandi* the child is named as if its parents were married. If it is a boy it is named after the boy's father and if its known father does not attend the ceremony the child is given its father's sept by proxy. The attitude of the known father is therefore immaterial and once the village has decided the matter the child's paternity is assured.

In a case of Dhaka (Dumka subdivision), Lakhi Kisku became pregnant by Hopna Murmu. The case went to the village council and Hopna admitted the connection. It was then arranged that he would take Lakhi into his house. His father, Dukhia, however, kept postponing matters and at last Lakhi's father called another meeting. Dukhia who was *handi-manjhi* came and a quarrel ensued. The villagers then appealed to the *sardar* who came to the village three times. Each time Dukhia avoided meeting him and after the third failure the villagers resorted to the minor

form of excommunication—*pante begar*. Lakhi's father was still hoping that Hopna would marry her, and made no attempt to arrange another husband. Dukhia did nothing and in January 1943 a boy was born. On its birth the villagers *pante begared* Lakhi and her father, but took them back after the *nim dak' mandī* when they paid three rupees. At the *nim dak' mandī* Lakhi named the child Dukhia Murmu and her father officiated for Hopna. A little later, Dukhia arranged another girl for Hopna and the wedding took place the same hot weather. Finding no other way, Lakhi's father then went to court and the magistrate awarded Lakhi five rupees a month as maintenance for the child, and when the matter came to me in revision, the question was only how to adjust the matter permanently. All the villagers said that Hopna must take the child since the child would have his land. It was decided, therefore, that after suckling the child another three months, Lakhi would hand it over to Hopna. Twelve rupees would be paid as bride price and twenty rupees as cost of the milk. All the villagers said that once Lakhi had finished suckling and the boy was with its father, her parents would easily get a husband for her. This was all that could be done but Lakhi wept at losing the child.

In a case from Harla, the boy, Matla Murmu, did not admit the connection but the villagers accepted the girl's statement as it agreed with village observation. Matla refused to marry her, so the village awarded fifteen rupees as bride price, and fifteen rupees for maintaining the child till marriage. In this case the child did not go to the boy's house and his obligations were compounded for a money payment. The child was a girl and was named after Matla's mother, while the girl's father officiated for Matla at the *nim dak' mandī*. The girl has since married but she has left the child in her father's house.

In the case from Kusma where Prem Kumar Murmu refused to marry Kapra Tudu, the child was a boy, so Kapra named it Sarkar Murmu after Prem Kumar's obdurate old father. Sarkar refused to have the child in his house. So the matter was compromised with an award of ten rupees a month for the maintenance of Kapra and the child. There was no special award of bride price as the monthly payment was taken to include it.

In cases such as these, the child may be born out of marriage but it is only in this sense that it is illegitimate. It is not called a *bidhua*, a bastard, for its father is known and its *nim dak' mandī* has been done.

It has scarcely any disabilities. Its mother and father do not live together but the child is not without a father. In fact, in most cases, the child is brought up in its father's house. If the



child is a girl, the father arranges her marriage. If the child is a boy, he is as much a son as a boy born in marriage. He can demand a partition and can inherit his father's land and moveables in equal shares with any other son. Even if he is living with his mother his right to his father's land and moveables does not cease. Moreover, he is part of Santal society. He has access to his father's *bongas*. He has got his father's sept. His sole tragedy is that to go to his father he must leave his mother, but even then his case is no worse than that of children in any marriage which fails.

## VI

## THE UNKNOWN FATHER

There remains the case in which paternity is denied and the village holds the matter is not proved.

O my love, come inside  
Like yours the hands and feet  
Like yours the eyes and face  
O my love a child has come.

But other evidence may be lacking. The girl's friends may know of her friendship but no one may have actually seen the boy and the girl together. Or the boy may have promised the girl everything but given her nothing. She may have no ring, armlet or necklace to connect him with her. At the same time, the girl's pregnancy may cause a revulsion in the boy.

While you were keen to have me  
You were always about  
But now I am having a baby  
You keep away.

The boy may wildly deny any kind of intimacy and if they have been careful lovers, it is only the girl's word against the boy's. Occasionally the circumstances may be such that even the girl does not know which boy is to blame.

In Nipania (Taljhari), Dukhni Kisku was a half-witted girl who had been with many boys. No one knew who the father of her child was and Dukhni herself could not say.

Or again two or more boys may even admit connections but no one be able to say which of them is in fact the father.

In these circumstances, the true father can neither maintain the child nor give him his sept. He is an unknown stranger who is beyond the scope of village control. Yet the child is not necessarily illegitimate. A substitute father is permissible and there are two ways in which this is arranged.

## VII

## THE FALSE FATHER

The first type of false father is one who is secured by marriage. When the pregnancy is unadjusted, the girl's father and his household are *pante begared* or semi-outcasted and they can only return to caste by arranging a father for the child and either giving a small feast or paying a few rupees.

The girl's parents look round for a boy who will marry the girl and accept the child as his own. If the child is a girl there is rarely much difficulty as the false father will be entitled to her bride price.

Dulhan Tudu of Dhanbad (Maharajpur) did not know who was the father of her child. So her father bought a husband for her by exempting him from payment of a bride price. The husband accepted the boy as his own son and the boy has now inherited his land.

In Majdiha (Ranga) a girl became pregnant *enec' halan te*, 'by gathering it in a dance.' The father was not known, so Phoce Tudu was brought from Lukhipur. He was bought for ten rupees, paid no bride price and married the girl before she gave birth. He is living in her house. The child was born but died later.

In Bamarkol (Bokrabandh) a girl became pregnant and the boy could not be proved. Her father, therefore, bought Dukhia Hansdak' of Belpahari. He paid him twelve *kaths* of paddy and a pair of bullocks. Dukhia lived in the girl's house until the child was born. He then went back to his home taking his wife and false child with him.

In these cases, the boy became the girl's husband, took over full responsibility for the child, named it as if he were the true father, and the child acquired all the rights of a true son.

Not all families, however, can arrange a bought husband. Moreover, if the child is a boy, a false father may not always want him to inherit his land. Another method is, therefore, tried. Instead of linking the false father to the girl by marriage a man or boy is produced who becomes the child's father but without any civil responsibilities. At the *nim dak' mandi*, he is the last to be shaved, to receive the marks of flour on his chest and to drink the rice and *nim* water. He acquiesces in the midwife's announcement of the name. He gives the child his sept. But he does not marry its mother. The child acquires no rights in his land. He is not required to maintain it. He becomes a 'god-father' rather than a father and his obligations are neither civil nor economic. But his action saves the child. The girl's father pays a few rupees or gives a small feast and the family is readmitted to the tribe.

In Madgawa (Hansdiha) a girl gave birth to a son. A husband was not bought for her but a Murmu was paid to give the child his sept. The child is now Babwe' Murmu and is married and has three children. He is working as a servant on the land of his mother's relations.

In the Nipania (Taljhari) case of the half-witted girl, Dukhni Kisku, Ragda Marandi was induced to give the child his sept. He took ten rupees but made it clear he would keep neither Dukhni nor the child. The child was brought up by Dukhni's parents and is now living with his maternal uncle.

In cases where several boys admit a joint responsibility they are usually fined, and with the fines the *jog-manjhi* is purchased to give the child his sept. Part of the money goes to the girl and some is kept by the meeting.

In such cases, the child is a *bidhua*, or bastard, only until its *nim dak' mandi* has been done. After that no one may on any account call it a *bidhua*, and if a villager does so, he is sharply fined. The child stays on with its mother. It possesses and inherits no land. If its mother marries later her husband may, if he likes, adopt it but he need not do so. Otherwise if it is a girl, she will be married when she grows up. But if it is a boy he has to live by day labour. The child's disability is not its lack of permanent father. Its main disability is its lack of land.

## VIII

### THE MARRIED MOTHER AND THE ABSENT HUSBAND

There is finally one other situation. When the girl is unmarried, a divorcee, or a widow, a true or a false father can be settled and the *nim dak' mandi* can proceed. But it is not only these who can have *bidhua* children. A married girl can also give birth to an illegitimate child.

In a case from Godda, a Santal went to the war. He came home on leave in September and returned in October, and the following September his wife gave birth to a child.

Similarly, Randhon Marandi of Manoharchok (near Kaerabani) stayed with her husband only a few days and then returned to her father. About a year later she became pregnant. The villagers said to her father, 'How is it that without staying at her husband's house her body is full?'

In these circumstances, the village adjudicates. If the boy is 'tracked down' he must take the child and give him his sept. If the boy marries the girl he must pay the husband double the bride price and, if he claims it, the cost of the wedding. If the husband keeps her he can claim *celan gitil* for 'cleaning the pot,' and this

may amount to fifteen rupees. If neither keeps her the boy must pay the husband as if he had taken her and also give the girl *chadaodi* or divorce money. He must also pay the girl the 'cost of the milk' and must maintain the child. He pays the *manjhi* five rupees as *bohok' banco* for 'saving his head.'

In the case from Manoharchok, the girl named Bhudu Tudu as the father. Bhudu at first denied it but later admitted it. The villagers then told him to take the girl. Bhudu married her and paid her husband double the bride price.

In other cases, when the father is not proved or is unknown the responsibility devolves on either the husband or the girl's father. If the child is born in the husband's house, it is this house which becomes impure. The husband or, if he is still away, a brother must then either give the child his sept or arrange a false father. If a false father is given, the wife is then divorced and sent back with the child to her father. But if the child is born in the house of the girl's father, it is he who must make the adjustments. If her husband divorces the girl her father must secure a father for the child and until he does so his house is *pante begared*. The married mother with an absent husband is then no different from the unmarried mother who has no husband at all.

## IX

## THE BIDHUA CHILD

But if all these expedients fail, what then is the situation?

If the unmarried mother is away from her village, working in the tea gardens or as a labourer in Bengal, the child is born and remains a *bidhua*. Because it has no father, neither true nor false, it has also no sept. It cannot worship any family *bongas*. It inherits no land. It can live only as a labourer. So long as it is known to be a bastard it cannot even marry. It is not even a Santal but a mere nobody with neither a tribe nor a sept. In such a situation the child lives with its mother until it grows up. After that it goes away. It leaves the area and settles where no one has ever heard of it. It assumes a sept and keeps its bastard origin a secret. Such cases, however, are so rare that I know of no examples. Santals talk of cases but no one can remember any. 'They have all left the country.' To-day, the permanent *bidhua* is a possibility rather than a fact.

If, however, the unmarried mother is still in her village other factors intervene. Until the *nim dak' mandi* has been done, the whole village is *maila* or unclean and no weddings, festivals or sacrifices can take place. At Mahuatannr (Karmatannr), a child was born during a wedding in May 1944. The boy's party had arrived but the wedding stopped as the village at once became

*maila*. Although, therefore, the child was only a few hours old, the *nim dak' mandi* was done forthwith and only then did the wedding proceed. Since the giving of a name and sept to the child is an essential part of *nim dak' mandi* the village remains *maila* until a father is secured. The inconvenience is so great that everyone wants to end it quickly and there is a general interest in getting a father promptly. Accordingly if the girl and her parents fail to arrange a father, the village itself intervenes. 'To save the child's head' they either fine the family or subscribe for bringing the household back into the tribe and they compel the *jog-manjhi* or another villager to act as the father.

In Monglapara (Pakaur), a widow, Lukhi Soren, had a baby girl. No one agreed to be bought. So in the end the villagers intervened. They chose an old man and against his will they forced him to give her his sept of Hansdak.'

In Kolha, Jethu Hansdak's daughter had a child. The father was not known. So three days after the birth the villagers caught the girl's brother-in-law, gave him twelve *kaths* of paddy and a pair of bullocks and compelled him to give the child his sept, and name. The false father was the husband of the girl's elder sister. He already had two sons of his own and apart from giving the name and sept he accepted no other obligations. The child was a boy and was later married as a *ghar jawae* or serving son-in-law.

In Mohuadangal (Dumka subdivision), a widow had a child. The alleged father absconded. So the family was *pante begared*. As the father was not proved, one way or the other, the *nim dak' mandi* was not performed and the village remained impure for seven months. Finally, the alleged father appeared, admitted his connection and named the child. This purified the village but, because of the delay, the widow was fined a large goat.

In Kusumpukur (Ranga) a girl gave birth to a son. She claimed that Girwa Hansdak' was the father. Girwa denied it and the village did not feel it was proved. But the girl was not satisfied. She refused to arrange a false father and at the *nim dak' mandi* her father officiated and named the child after Girwa's father, Shyam. The girl has not married since— 'she has no abode'—and the boy who is eight years old is still with her.

In this case, the village did not approve of the naming but neither did it reject it. The naming father acquired no responsibilities. He was no different from a father who had been bought or compelled to give a name. The child inherited no land and received no maintenance. But its mother's insistence made it a Santal and by its acquiescence, the village ceased to be impure.

## X

## CONCLUSION

In deciding this attitude, three factors are obviously of prime importance. There is first the religious role of the father. He is the agent who provides a child with house *bongas* and as a corollary with a family. If a child is to be a Santal he must, therefore, have a father. Secondly, all Santals are loath to lose a Santal. This is due to tribal pride but also to their solidarity. The tribe would obviously be weakened if the children of Santal mothers were not all Santals. Lastly there is the intimate connection between removing the pollution of child-birth and admitting the child to the *bongas*. In Santal practice, the two go together, and to perform the one, the other is necessary. It is due to these three factors that the illegitimate child is almost unknown in Santal society.

# THE ENADI

By V. RAGHAVIAH

## I

If you come across a man anywhere in the southern half of Andhradesa, tall in stature, bony in structure, somewhat dark in complexion, with ringed curly hair tied in a bunch, a scanty straggling beard, prominent broad cheek bones, bright sparkling eyes, negligible moustache, lanky legs, rather thick lips, and speaking with an elongated sound, you can at once recognize him as an Enadi. He wears just a piece of a rag to cover himself, bathes like a water-fowl as often as he comes across water and is well accustomed to cover long distances between sunrise and sunset in search of elusive game. With a palmyra-leaf fish-basket hanging by his loin-string, a crude bamboo fish-rod resting on his shoulder, he can cover miles, encircling tanks and edging along water-courses with scarcely an idea of the value of time. His fishing operations are modest. He seldom embarks on netting expeditions, rarely ventures into the sea and is indeed mortally afraid of probing its hidden contents. When the Enadi is not fishing he is engaged in digging rat-holes with a sharpened wooden implement—this he seriously thinks should be called hunting! He seldom minds engaging himself all day ripping open the labyrinthian underground passage of the cunning field-rat just to rob the poor creature of its winter hoardings, maybe a handful of grain. Having seized the hoarder and its hoardings, he forgets all the trouble and toil the hunt costs him, and with a beaming smile and a swift trot the contented Enadi and his inseparable partner wend their way home in self-satisfied silence.

You may succeed in inducing the Enadi to part with his life but certainly not with the company of his wife whenever he is out on his hunting expeditions. If there is anybody on earth who is excessively homesick, it must undoubtedly be the Enadi. He never goes out without his partner; whether in prayer or in the field, the woman must keep the company of the man and relieve the hours of his tedium. It is seldom you come across a woman or a man among the Enadis who lives alone and uncoupled. He always claims it as his virtue though others may condemn it as his vice.

Some anthropologists, for example Dr. John Shortt who wrote about the Enadis prior to 1850, call them a Dravidian tribe and describe their features as Mongolian. Von Eickstedt finds a Melanid element in the Enadis as in the Chenchus. It cannot be said that the Mongolian flat nose and oblique slit eyes are common among the Enadis though it is undeniable that they are part of the twenty-five million aboriginals or original inhabitants of this country.

## II. ORIGIN

The beginnings of the Enadi are sunk deep in the fathomless limbo of primitive oblivion. Strange and fantastic theories have

been advanced about the origin of the tribe. The plain name of the people has been subjected to various contortions with the aid of which curious theories of their beginnings have sprung up. Thurston discusses whether from the word *Yanam*, which means in Sanskrit a boat, and the word *Adi*, which is interpreted as a means of livelihood, the Enadis cannot be credited with a sea-faring avocation in the earlier days of their existence. But as none of them are known by tradition to have at any time plied boats he dismisses the theory as impossible. Mackenzie refers to an old legend and gives the following account :

‘ There is a legend of old that one named Raghava brought with him 60 families of his tribe from Pakanadu district (a portion of the present Kurnool and surrounding districts) locating himself with them at Srihari-kota (a small island separated by 15 miles of backwaters on the east coast in Nellore District and 70 miles north of Madras) and clearing the country, formed Raghava-puram. The people by degrees spread through a few adjoining districts. A Rishi who came from Benares and was named Ambikeswara, resided in Madhvarnaya or the Central Wilderness and there bathing daily in the river paid homage to Siva. The wild people (Enadis) of their own accord brought him daily fruits and edibles, putting them before him. At length he enquired the reason. They replied that their country was infested by a terrible serpent and that they wished to be taught charms to destroy it as well as charms for other needful purposes. He taught them and then vanished away.’

The above interesting story must have been the outcome of a fertile brain which wanted to trace the even now well-known dexterity of the Enadi in catching cobras to some divine origin. The astonishing reluctance of the tribe even to-day to accept medical treatment except from their own people, whose knowledge of medicine may be very poor, for any of their bodily ailments, and their incorrigible belief in prayer and incantation as the best cure for every illness, may have given momentum to this legend. The story need not of course be taken seriously as it is unthinkable that 60 families should have multiplied themselves into the nearly two lakhs of their present population, in spite of the very high rate of fecundity for which the Enadis are noted, unless the number 60 stands for different groups denoted by their surnames.

Some would like to stretch out from *Yanadam*, which is said to be the purer form of Enadi: and which means ‘ subduing the sea ’ that the tribe of Enadi originally came over to their present abode by crossing the sea. The probability of this interpretation depends for its value on the assumption that the Enadis were originally confined to the island of Srihari-kota and that the now hip-deep shallow backwaters that separate this island from the mainland



was the sea that they were obliged to cross. *Yanadamu* means sea-coast also.

Another view taken is that the name Enadi is the corrupted form of the Sanskrit word *Anātha*, which means 'leaderless.' The tribe might have been from the beginning as it is even now nomadic, without a head or organization and consequently uncared for. Some of the members of the tribe are as primitive and 'uncivilized' as they were thousands of years ago and eat things which others shudder to touch.

A more natural and perhaps correct interpretation of the word will be to treat *Enadi* as the corruption of the Sanskrit word *Anadi* which simply means 'without a beginning.' As the original inhabitants of this part of the country, and so ancient that their origin could not be remembered, it is no wonder that the tribe should have been popularly called Anadis, aboriginals or the original sons of the soil. It is also argued that the original name of these may have been Chenchus, by which name also they are still called, taken after Chenchu-Lakshmi, the forest wife of god Ahobila Narasimha of Kurnool District. This Ahobilam, the seat of that god, is in the midst of forests in the Eastern Ghats.

One version about the original abode of the Enadis is that they were inhabiting the wilds near the Pulicot lake on the coast line, in the present Chingleput district, some forty miles north of Madras. In these forests they hunted and in the lakes they fished untrammelled until they were enslaved by the Reddis who were once a ruling class in Andhra and are even now a dominant caste in some of the Telugu districts, particularly Nellore. Another version is that unable to bear the tyranny and exactions of the rulers in the area of the Eastern Ghats, the Enadis fled from the mountains and came to inhabit the plains between the Ghats and the bay.

### III. NUMBERS

According to H. E. Stokes, who worked in the Nellore District during the years 1867 and '68, the Enadis inhabiting the District numbered 20,000 in 1865. Dykes, the then Collector, reported that of these 15,406 were in the Collector's Division and the Zamindari tracts and that 4,099 lived in Nellore. The rest lived in Kavali and Kandukur taluks of the same District. By the time of the Census of 1891 their numbers had swelled to 85,000. The 1921 Census disclosed that they numbered 138,000, distributed in the following districts of Andhra :

Nellore	..	..	..	..	79,000
Guntur	..	..	..	..	18,000
Chittoor	..	..	..	..	11,000
Krishna	..	..	..	..	9,000

Agency Tracts	..	..	..	6,000
Chengleput	..	..	..	4,500
Ganjam	..	..	..	3,600
Other districts	..	..	..	5,500

The Census of 1931 is silent about the Enadis as is the Census of 1941. Being the largest aboriginal tribe in Andhra, possibly in the whole of South India, it is surprising that the Census authorities should have failed to enumerate this tribe separately while care was taken to count the Alans of Malabar, who numbered only four souls, separately. Judging from the rate of progress in previous years, it will not be an exaggeration to put down the present Enadi figure at two lakhs.

The island of Srihari-kota, which rightly or wrongly came to be popularly associated with the original home of the Enadis, came into British hands in 1835. In 1867 there lived 489 Enadis on this island engaged mainly in picking forest produce for Government. This little colony attracted the attention of Government officials who even in 1867 began to show much interest in its progress. Being very prolific, the little settlement of Enadis increased in their numbers by 160 per cent between 1835 and 1867. Registration of men and marriages was introduced among them. Premiums on child-births were given to them by Government at the rate of two annas and six pies for a male and one anna and three pies for a female child. Their wages were paid in the form of food-stuffs and clothing. They had in turn to collect honey, tamarind, nux vomica and *chiru-veru* (a root used for dyeing purposes). By 1860 full money payment in wages was introduced. All efforts to put the people into cultivation proved futile. They could not take even to rearing cattle. In 1857 a school was opened for them by the authorities and 40 to 50 boys were on the rolls. A measure of paddy was given to every one of the school-going children per day to induce them to take to education. But somehow the school had to be closed after some time, as it was felt unnecessary.

Even to-day the birth-rate among the Enadis is not a whit reduced despite the most unfavourable conditions in which they live. In spite of their poverty and the misery of their dwelling quarters it is a charming sight to see clusters of stark naked urchins with bright faces, bubbling with joy, playing in and about their tiny conical huts, and literally rolling in dust, lost in merriment. If anything substantially contributes to the multiplication of their numbers, it must largely be their care-free life. Truly the saying that 'the tribe that dances does not die' applies with greater force to the Enadis than to any others. The Enadis love dance, play and merriment, and spend whole moon-lit nights in boisterous joy.

## IV. SEPTS AND SUB-SEPTS

Though the Census report of 1891 enumerates as many as 89 sub-divisions, denoting mostly respective avocations, the Enadis can be divided into two main divisions, Challas and Manchis. Manchi means in Telugu 'good' and places the Enadis so called on a superior status. The Manchis are on the whole far larger in number than the Challas who are more primitive and less civilized than the Manchis. The Challas eat the leavings of food eaten by those of other communities, barring Harijans and fellow-aborigines, and are for this reason looked down upon by the Manchis. Shortt says : ' On the whole they are divided into refuse-eating Enadis in Ongole (now Guntur District) and those who do not eat refuse. There are the *Kappala* or Chala, the frog catchers, the *Panta* or crop Enadis of Nellore taluk and in Kavali the Somaris (lazy men).' Those Enadis who were eating frogs were known as Kappalas or frog-eaters, though no Enadi nowadays cares to eat frogs. The Panta sect was called so because those belonging to it watch crops and are also engaged in agriculture. The *Reddi* Enadis being neat and civilized are allowed to do cooking and serving in the houses of farmers called Reddis. The *Nakkala* Enadis are those who eat foxes (Nakka meaning a fox) and their number is very, very small. The *Adivi* (forest) Enadis are those who live in forests and eke out a living by hunting. These men are very good shots and boldly attack wild animals like boars, bears, leopards and even tigers in the forests of the ghats. They are given licences to keep guns even now and several of them are entertained by the Forest Department. A few of them can use the bow and arrow and the sling as well. Endowed with a thin muscular frame, thin calves, nimble feet, they can run for miles without exhaustion. Though they are not good wrestlers they are experts in defence as well as in offence. Having an inborn horror of cruelty, and being afraid of torture and persecution, they never indulge in serious crime. The Enadis inhabiting the North Arcot and the Kurnool districts are called Chenchus, a name derived from their worship of Chenchudevara, the common deity of all Enadis.

Most of the Enadis claim to belong to Suryavamsa, which fact they remember on every auspicious or inauspicious occasion. This is perhaps one of the various ways in which the Dravidian influence was felt over them. Several claim to follow Sri Ramanuja and wear the white and red Vaishnavaita caste mark as an external mark of allegiance to the faith of that great South Indian saint. The followers of this faith refuse to mourn the death of any member in their families, and seating the corpse erect, the nearest relatives of the deceased make a feast sitting around it. They bury their dead in the same posture as other non-Brahmin Vaishnavaites do.

The Enadis have *Gotrams* known as *Pogada* (a sweet-smelling flower tree with a thick foliage and growing to a good height), *Govinda*, etc.

The surnames of the Enadis afford an interesting study. They mostly indicate the occupations the ancestors of the family bearing the surname were originally following, though some surnames indicate the villages to which they originally belonged. Thus, for instance, the name '*Konda*' refers to dwelling in the hills. '*Ekula*' indicates the profession of carding cotton. '*Chokkala*' means wearing shirts. '*Potla*' refers to the fighting instinct. '*Mekala*' means a goat-herd. '*Manikala*' suggests the profession of measuring out things. '*Pamula*' refers to expertness in catching snakes. '*Tupakula*' indicates a living by shooting with a gun or it may mean one favoured with a gun licence. '*Chembati*' shows that the family was engaged in blacksmith's work. '*Tenkayala*' refers to the cocoanut trade or cocoanut cultivation. '*Kattula*' may mean a wielder of a sword or one manufacturing knives. '*Marrigunta*' is the name of the village to which the family bearing the name was originally attached. '*Doddi*' means a sheep-fold or pen. '*Odamala*' is a water-lizard and '*Elugu*' a bear, and these have been accepted as surnames in accordance with the practice of aboriginal tribes to worship objects of fear. As Verrier Elwin puts it 'Someone in the totem is bitten by a horse or killed by a tiger and the name of the animal is given to the totem.' Several Enadis bear the surname of '*Puli*' which in Telugu means a tiger. '*Golkonda*' is the surname of many, indicating that the particular clan should have migrated from Golconda, the famous and historic town in the Nizam's Dominions.

It is interesting to note that septs bearing any one of the aforementioned surnames embrace thousands of Enadis scattered all over Andhra. They serve to differentiate one group or clan or totem from the others, so that marriage between the persons of the same sept may be avoided as is done in regard to persons of the same Gotra among the Hindu castes. It will, therefore, be wrong to conclude that these surnames represent different sub-castes as the '*Challas*' and '*Manchis*' do.

#### V. INTER-UNTOUCHABILITY

There exists a kind of untouchability between the Challas and the Manchis as is the case also between Malas and Madigas, the two main divisions among the Harijans (Scheduled Classes) of Andhra. Among the Enadis the Challas are treated as an inferior caste in the same way as the Madigas (Chamars or shoe-makers) are looked down upon by the Malas (Mahars) and other superior classes of Harijans.

The Manchi Enadis refuse to interdine, intermarry or even intermix with the Challas. They keep separate wells, separate resi-

dential areas and separate caste associations or panchayats. The Challas cannot touch the earthen pots, cooking-vessels or eating-plates of the Manchis. A Manchi Enadi woman who takes a Challa husband and bears children by him is never reclaimed to her former society. It is not that all Challas are inferior to all Manchis in the matter of habits, dress, living and cleanliness. A kind of untouchability is observed irrespective of the above considerations. It is as difficult to bring the two communities of Enadis together as it is to unite the two sects of Harijans for purposes of eating, drinking and marriage. The Manchi girl-students of an Enadi Girls' Hostel refused pointblank to interdine with the Challa girl-students in the neighbourhood in 1943, though fortunately the Manchi Enadi boys of the Enadi Boys' Hostel, Nellore, readily agreed to ignore the class distinction and gladly took in a Challa boy as a boarder without waiting for the opinions of their parents in the villages.

Non-observance of this inter-untouchability entails loss of caste, which means many a hardship to the outcaste. Word will be sent briskly to all those living in the surrounding villages, including the relations of the outcaste, by the Caste Heads called Pedda Enadis or Maistries, proclaiming the ban on the person who has lost caste. From that day onwards he will be strictly boycotted in all social functions. He cannot give fire or accept it for his domestic purposes to and from members of his sect. The Enadi washerman and the caste barber refuse to serve him. He cannot dip his pot and draw water from the common pond or well as the case may be. In case of any birth or death in his house he cannot hope to get the attendance even of his daughters and their husbands. He will not be allowed to sit along with and on a par with his co-caste men and women in any gathering, religious, social or communal. In short, he is lost to his society once and for all.

It is true that the Challas eat the leavings of the plate. One has to bend down one's head in shame when groups of Enadis of the Challa sub-caste swarm like flies around a house on a festive or marriage occasion for a snatch at the thrown-out leaf-plates containing the remnants of cast-away food. It is a miserable sight to see the urchins separating food from the street dust and filling their stomachs with the stuff. This evil habit for which poverty alone cannot be the sole cause, for there are several who are as poor but still do not eat leavings, is happily going out of vogue though it has not disappeared completely. For this very reason alone the Manchi Enadis may have ample excuse to keep the Challas at a distance, but there can be no end to this vicious circle if everyone who eats the uneatable is to be treated as an untouchable. The Manchis themselves eat rats, bandycoots, bears, tortoises, forest cats, mongooses and porcupines, which are

shunned by other caste people, and do not like to be treated as untouchables on this score. At this rate, the carrion-eating Madiga is an untouchable to the Mala, who abhors it. The beef-eater has to be shunned by those who do not eat it! The meat-eater has to go down in the social strata before the vegetarian! The Challas' pernicious habit, while calling forth the most earnest and urgent efforts for its eradication, cannot supply a justification for perpetuating untouchability, for the Baigas of the Central Provinces, though they eat squirrels, bats, ants, monkeys, field frogs' legs and nearly all varieties of rats, are not treated as untouchables. A closer examination and scrutiny into the causes of untouchability of every sort irresistibly leads to a political origin in days gone by as a very effective and everlasting stigma of inferiority complex imprinted on the vanquished by the victor. Inter-untouchability also can be traced to the same source as untouchability. It may be that the Challas were defeated and overpowered by the Manchis in their innumerable tribal battles, a common feature of primitive life, and had to accept the stain of inferiority as an inevitable result of the defeat. How else can inferiority be better demonstrated and perpetuated than by the powerful medium of untouchability, an ingenious weapon employed largely even in modern times by the European against the Asiatic, the White intruder against the indigenous Negro, in a thousand and one ways?

## VI. FROM THE FOREST TO THE PLAINS

As in the case of all aboriginals we do not have any history of the Enadis of early times. Though one of the earliest tribes that inhabited Hindustan, the poor, submissive and enduring Enadis never attracted the attention either of the poet or the chronicler. Even legends they have none. Not even two in a thousand can read and write at the present day. They never boast of ruling traditions and never lay claims to even forgotten greatness. The bullying policeman and the meddlesome village-headman have been their constant dread in modern times, and how to escape their unwelcome attentions has been of late the main subject of their engrossing interest. You cannot gather any idea of their past history even from their songs, for they are very few and commonplace. They either refer to the evasive tricks of the field rat, the dodging tactics of the pond fish, or to the preposterous overtures of an overbearing head-constable and contain many sarcastic thrusts provoking rib-splitting laughter.

Boswell, in his *Nellore District Manual*, prepared in 1873, writes:

'In their persons the Enadis are filthy in the extreme. Their clothing is of the scantiest nature; the men have seldom anything but *langotis* and the women wear the merest rag of a cloth. The men

tie their hair in a knot usually on the top of the head ; the women have their hair flying loose. The huts are mere circular frames of sticks, usually 6 or 8 ft. in diameter and thatched with palmyra leaves and they crowd into them like pigs. They seldom possess anything but a few pots and fowls. They gain their livelihood, some few as agricultural labourers, some by making mats and leaf-platters, and by cutting fire-wood in the jungles and selling it. They are most commonly, however, employed as watchmen for crops and in pounding paddy in villagers' houses, receiving as wages small quantities of grain. In the southern coast talukas, some are found in every village and they are not so migrating in their habits as in the inland and northern parts of the districts. In the Udayagiri and inland taluks they live principally by hunting, an avocation which entails constant movement from place to place.'

Edgar Thurston's account of an earlier and more 'uncivilized' state of the Enadis when they lived in the forests hunting and fishing is in the following words :

'The Enadis are Animists. They produce fire by friction, eat almost raw animal food after merely scorching or heating the flesh of the game they killed. Fire is made with two sticks, one short, the other long. In the former a square cavity is scooped out and it is held firmly on the ground while the long one is twisted rapidly to and fro in the cavity. A rag or even dried leaves are set fire to.'

The Enadi is a Hindu by faith. Even to-day the practice of eating scorched or heated flesh persists not so much because the Enadis find a special taste in it but mainly because they are too poor to prepare it in any other way. Even an earthen pot is a valuable to several of them. The primitive way of making fire is given up though matches are not used owing to their inability to pay for them. As is the case even now among the poor countryfolk, fire is borrowed in the shape of a lighted rag or a red-hot cinder or a half-burnt dung-cake.

Much water has flowed since the Enadi preferred to abandon the freedom of the jungle for the civilization of the plain. He gave up the bow and arrow only to wield the big municipal street broom in the towns and to hold the watchman's long stick in the countryside. In some cases he lost life in the open for a huddling in the slums. In his forest home he might not have seen even the shadow of a bully but here in the plains his footsteps are dogged and his freedom curtailed.

Time was when the Enadi, confined to his forest home, was fully content with gathering honey, chara seeds and wild rice and exchanging the same for the necessities of life in the villages nearby.

But how long could he do so when on every side the advent of new ideas has been beating on him as the hailstorm does on the traveller? He at last yielded to the pressure of his surroundings. He quitted his native home and went out in search of food and better living. He reached the busy towns and the far off villages and even crossed the boundaries of his District, but alas, only to be keenly disappointed. He soon realized that he only forged new fetters for himself. He was pushed aside as ignorant and despised as uncivilized. He came to be treated as a beast of burden and was never credited either with respectability or responsibility. What is more, he was dubbed a criminal and exploited by all and sundry. He lifted up his sullen head and cast a longing look behind. But where is now his native home? Where are his native forests? Where can he have his care-free life, his perennial pleasures and, more than all, his unlimited freedom? He has become the slave of other slaves. The place he found himself now in is a cage inside another cage.

It cannot be denied that the Enadi of the present day is not the Enadi of Shortt's day. He has improved immensely within the last one century. He is no longer indolent and timid. He has ceased to be nomadic though he has not yet acquired a home of his own. It is as rare to find an Enadi owning a house as it is to find a Harijan not owning one. Contentment is still his unique virtue or vice. Often pitching his lonely conical cocoon-like hut at the edge of the village fields, or on the bank of a pond, he watches by night and by day his master's crops with none else to keep company with him and his wife except the heavy stillness of the night. There is a touch of irony in his life. Himself not owning anything, he is the watch-dog of every one else's properties. Unshaven, unwashed, almost naked, he is still a moving spectacle of poverty and a striking illustration of social injustice.

The Enadi has nothing to call his own. His ever-shifting residence, for want of a permanent habitation, was dried up in his love for hearth and home. His little hut is seldom provided with any door. Except half-a-dozen broken or half-broken pots which are his utensils, a torn date-leaf mat, a palmyra-leaf fish-basket, a middle-sized stick with a sharpened edge, a thin bamboo fishing rod, there will be nothing else in an Enadi's hut which can be called property. Except the residents of towns, the Enadis in the villages rarely finger a coin. Tanned by the sun and exposed to the rain, he has robust health and seldom falls ill. He would fain part with life rather than part with his age-long belief that all new medicines are injurious to health. He has his own herbs and roots which he administers to himself and his fellow-Enadis with appreciable results. The only epidemic he fears is cholera for which he possesses no effective remedy. He has efficacious decoctions



for fevers, rheumatism, tooth and ear diseases cobra bites, scorpion stings and elephantiasis. His power of resistance is superb. He seldom takes to the sick-bed and generally manages to live to a ripe old age.

The Enadis are thickly spread over the coastal taluks of Nellore and Guntur districts. They cannot thrive in places affected by water scarcity. They take to water with the avidity of a fish, and are very good swimmers.

Not having their own houses they are scattered in the backyards of ryots, on the brinks of village ponds, and in the '*anadhi-nam*' lands of Government. Within the past ten years they are getting organized into associations, colonies and settlements formed by the provincial and district Enadi organizations with the aid of the Labour Department of the Government of Madras. In some places in the Nellore and Guntur districts, Enadis purchased house-sites and have built a few colonies of their own. Those living in the coastal districts of Andhra are migrants from their parent district, Nellore, and have done so within the past forty years in search of better living. In fact the Enadis of Guntur, Krishna, and Godavari districts are better looking, better fed and more cultured than those living in Nellore. There is a marked difference between men living in the coastal parts and those residing inland. The former are finer than the latter, but the latter are sturdier than the former. Very few Enadis live on hills or in forests at present. They have taken to a more peaceful life than their ancestors, though one may doubt whether they have on this account become happier.

## VII. MARRIAGES, OBSEQUIES AND OTHER CEREMONIES

The maternal uncle of the bride plays an important rôle in all auspicious functions performed in an Enadi's house. Even when a girl attains puberty for the first time, the maternal uncle spreads a new cloth on a new mat in a new hut, specially erected for the purpose of keeping the matured girl, and places a *nux vomica* twig, to keep away the evil spirits, betel leaves and nuts on the four corners of the cloth. He also gives the girl soaked rice. She has to stay in this hut for nine days untouched by others, and while bathing every day and washing her clothes, has to bathe nine times on the ninth day. It is only after this that she is taken in. The hut, the mat and the girl's clothing will be burnt on the last day before dawn, when a feast is given to the nearest relatives in honour of the occasion.

When women go into menses they are untouchables for a period of four days like the rest of the Hindus. Meanwhile they ought not to touch pots and other eating vessels and cannot even enter the house until the fifth day after taking a bath.

Marriage is an elaborate function among them. It is celebrated over a period of three days or closed in one according to the status or resources of the bride's father. No marriage can take place between those of the same surnames. To ascertain the most auspicious time for the function, the Enadis plant a stick vertically on the marriage platform two feet high in place of an arrow which they used in olden days, and when the stick ceases to throw any shadow then the *taali* or the marital string is tied to the bride's neck. Sometimes a *purohit* or priest is also consulted.

The maternal uncle of the bride again plays his inevitable rôle. He presents a pair of shoes to her, and is paid by the bridegroom half a rupee. The bridal pair sit facing each other. The bridegroom sits looking eastwards on a bed or a mattress. The maternal uncles of both take their seats by the side of their respective parties. A cloth is spread between the bride and the bridegroom on which the marriage presents consisting of money, clothes, jewels are placed along with betel leaves and nuts. All the relations sit around, the women sitting separate from men.

The bridegroom has nowadays to pay six rupees to the parents of the bride, and has got to present a new sari and bodice to his mother-in-law. In return he gets a pair of cloths for himself and a sari for his bride presented by her parents. The expenses of the entire function are borne in the ratio of one by the bride's party and two by the groom's party. The *taali*, which has to be brought by the bridegroom, must be of gold. The brother-in-law presents the bridegroom with a silver ring for his second toe for which the former receives a pair of cloths as presents. Prior to some forty years ago, the bridegroom had to pay only eight annas to the bride's parents in place of the six rupees he pays now. The *taali* is tied only to virgin brides. The Enadis copy the Hindus in the use of the bridal crown, called *bhashyakam*, and in the couple throwing over each other handfuls of rice after the *taali* is tied. No *man-trams* are chanted for this function.

The expenses and presents to be paid in a widow re-marriage for the first time are half of the above list. No celebration of a marriage function takes place for a woman who is widowed for the second or more times. A widow does not wear the vermilion mark nor is she allowed the privilege of wearing a bodice or bangles even after remarriage. A divorced woman has greater status than a widow and is entitled to go through a fresh marriage ceremonial whereas a widow cannot. A woman can take a husband as many times as she chooses and no stigma is attached on that account. The ancient limit upto seven husbands is no longer observed, perhaps owing to the increased splitting up of family life among the tribesmen.

As soon as a son comes of age and takes a wife, he invariably leaves the parents' house and sets up an independent home for himself and his wife. The obligation on the part of the grown-ups to maintain the old parents is very slender, though it may be largely due to the want of a fixed home and to the scanty means of sustenance. The aged couple cling to the last son until he too enters married life and thereafter live by themselves with the little earnings they can make, always supplemented by the begging bowl. They make their round of visits to their daughters' and sons' homes where they stay, according to convention and dictated by necessity, will not be longer than two or three days at each place, and then return to their solitariness. Generally old couples do not have any reason to separate until death itself parts them once for all.

A good number of relations far and near are invited to the marriage by a special messenger. It is incumbent on every relation to give the bride at least a new bodice. It is a wholesome practice among the Enadis that relations attending a function or ceremony, auspicious or inauspicious, should carry with them some rice or other food grain and some vegetables. The quantity is not fixed nor measured. One has to add one's quantity to the common heap placed in the centre of the house. The marriage party meets the relatives a few yards in advance to the accompaniment of music, their feet are washed, and then they are conducted to the marriage pandal with music and dance.

The women and men nowadays take a loan of washed clothes from the village or town washerman by paying him a small fee and appear in the best of dress commensurate, of course, with their status.

Saffron and *kunkum* play a large part in the Enadi's marriage as it does in the house of any Hindu on festive occasions. Women paint their faces and feet with saffron and men and women put on round *kunkum* marks in the centre of their foreheads. The clothing of the bride and bridegroom is dipped in saffron water and worn.

After agreement is reached on the bridal presents, a curtain is drawn between the couple and then the bridegroom in the midst of music and blessings showered on the pair with flowers and *kunkum* rice, the bridegroom presses the bride's left foot with his own right foot and ties the *taali* to the bride's neck with a saffron chord. It is after this that the ends of the bride's sari and the bridegroom's dhoti are knotted together as a symbol of their earthly union. The star, Arundhati, is seen by the new couple on the same night of the marriage. A lot of mirth is indulged in on the occasion. In a plot that is white-washed and on which figures are drawn in various colours known as '*Ari-veni*,' a ring is thrown between the bride and the groom and the one who succeeds in picking it up

first is declared the victor. Women and men who witness this competition cheer the pair with unrestricted laughter.

During the function a professional buffoon from the same community, well-versed in ludicrous dancing, keeps the gathering engaged constantly by his witty sayings, humorous jokes, stupid pranks and intermittent dances raising peals of laughter from the womenfolk. He enjoys the utmost licence on such occasions and is permitted to wave a leather-strip freely on the heads of others to promote common merriment. He puts on fancy guises, disfigures himself to provoke fun and keeps himself very busy all the time.

Elopement of a virgin is condoned on condition that the couple go through a bare form of marriage in a temple. The *taali* is tied but the function is bare and simple.

Marriage results from the free choice and will of the bride. It is unthinkable to compel an Enadi girl to marry one whom she does not like. This freedom is so well recognized that it is never questioned. Though nothing is more pleasing to Enadis than to have a touch of romance about their engagements, the approval of the parents is always sought. Girls are always married after puberty though the period intervening is usually not long, due mostly to the anxiety of the earning head of the family to maintain one member less. Engagements take place mostly without the knowledge of the parents though the parties always keep within bounds and do not create difficult situations.

Enadis do not have to go to courts to obtain divorce. As they are mostly without property and do not even possess a house or house-site of their own, they have no need of the civil courts either in maintenance matters or in disputes affecting property.

The divorce system prevalent among the Enadis is a very simple one. It has none of the evils of the European method. If a husband and wife cannot pull on, they separate without any fuss. Generally, no attempt is made to prove each other's misbehaviour, mainly perhaps due to the complete absence of obligations in regard to alimony which is again traceable to want of property. If the couple are young, if they have issue and if either of the parties is anxious to cling to the other, despite her or his separation, an inquiry is held into the matter by the elders of the locality or by the nearest relations of the couple. Charges and counter-charges are made before this self-constituted tribunal and the cases are patiently heard, sometimes even for two or three days, the expenses of the judges being borne by the parties all the time. If the wife is at fault and has been guilty of infidelity and if she insists on separation, she will have to part with her clothing and any jewels given to her by her husband. If the husband is at fault, the wife can

certainly retain them. Separation is pressed only when either of the parties is unfaithful. Having apportioned the blame, the elders may induce the couple to resume their family life. If there is a seducer figuring in the affair, he is brought to book, and if seduction is proved, the woman who has been led astray as well as the seducer are both fined. The fines thus collected are spent for a feast after the expenses of the trial are met or distributed in cash among the members of the particular colony. Sometimes separated couples rejoin even after a long time. Once separation is effected in the presence of elders, the parties do not bear any malice or illwill against each other. When they meet next after entering into fresh family alliances, they meet as friends. On separation, children at the breast invariably go to the mother. Regarding the rest, they are easily adjusted, the bigger ones, particularly boys, preferring to stay with the father.

Adultery used to be punished in olden times by making the woman stand in the red-hot sun all day long with a load of sand on her head. This practice has gone out of vogue now. An adulterous woman loses status in the community, and even caste, if she associates herself with any other tribe, with Harijans or with Erukals (another aboriginal tribe), Dommaras (acrobats), and in the case of a Manchi woman with a Challa man. The Baliya Setty who was deciding all caste disputes has lost his influence of late and the Enadi elders and colony Panchayat have taken his place.

The woman is as a rule faithful to the man and is attached to him until the man proves disloyal to the marital tie. When she changes her mind, she does not tarry long. She is by nature as emotional as she is affectionate. She is as simple as she is attractive. Where the husband is sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, there are cases where the wife takes to another husband but whenever such a thing happens it is under stress of hunger and starvation.

New alliances in conjugal life are often formed at the large festive gatherings that annually take place around hill temples. Thousands of Enadis walk scores of miles to have a holiday on these occasions when they spend their few pice either on the merry-go-round or at the Kasi-Rameswar magnified picture show, or gaping at the costly sweetmeat stalls, or watching the pomp and splendour of the neighbouring aristocracy that visit the temple festivals or enjoying the dances of the temple dancing girls, gazing at the luminous lights, the captivating fireworks and the never-ending festivities that a large rural congregation gives itself up to. The male Enadi borrows some decent clothing for himself and his spouse and, tying a jasmine garland around his own tuft which he oils and combs for once in a few months, he takes round his wife to these great festivals called *tirunaals*, with the zeal and attention of a young lover. Though his means may not enable him to make

any purchases at the bazaars, he does not feel at all unhappy or dissatisfied, for he is of all people endowed with an inborn contentment.

Enadis are jealous of conjugal rights and insist on the constant companionship of their fair partners. The women on the other hand strongly resent being suspected or shadowed. They are never meek and submissive to their husbands and seldom yield an inch in having everything their own way. As is the case with probably all womenfolk among the aboriginal tribes, the Enadi women are bolder and more intelligent than their men.

The wife never calls the husband by name. Whenever she has to refer to her partner she merely says 'My Enadi.' It is also customary to refer to the husband as 'My *Mama*' by the wife as is the case with other women in rural Andhra. If the male is pretty old, she refers to him as 'My Old Man.' Polygamy is in vogue among the Enadis.

The tonsure ceremony exists among Enadis also. The maternal uncle of the lad after receiving a new cloth, a measure of rice and eight annas cash, plucks a lock of hair from the head of the lad and ties it to an Aruka tree. Then the lad's head is shaved, a fowl is offered to the God and a feast to the relations. This is usually followed by a dance though the use of torch-light on such occasions is now forgotten.

Obsequies are as costly to the poor Enadi as the marriage function is. The amount that he borrows on each such occasion will be equal to his earnings for an entire year and the debt compels him to sell himself to his creditors until the original debt with its usurious accumulations is wiped out. Cases are not wanting where the debt outlives the debtor and passes on to his sons and sons' sons.

The corpse is brought out of the hut by the nearest relations, who wash the body and lay it on the bier made of twigs and poles in front of the hut. Then they cover the corpse with a new white cloth up to the neck and the son throws puffed rice on it. The bier is carried to the burial ground by the *Sapindas*. If a man dies on Tuesday a live fowl or a frog or a cocoanut is tied to the bier even at the outset and these are buried alive with the corpse as a means of propitiating evil spirits and warding off evil consequences resulting from death on such a day. A copper coin and betel leaves and nuts are placed beside the corpse. Face downwards it is laid on the cloth spread in the grave, head turned southwards. The eldest son throws three handfuls of earth on the grave which is filled afterwards by other relatives. There is no taboo on cremation, though on account of its cost the poorer men generally avoid it. After bathing at the burial ground or nearby, all go to the hut of the deceased before which three pots containing ash-water,

dung-water and turmeric-water are kept as disinfectants. Those who accompanied the corpse dip their hands first in ash-water and then in the others and sprinkle the same on themselves. A little oil-lamp burns in the house of the departed. All make obeisance to it before eating. Six balls of rice are taken to the grave on the *Chinna-Dinam* (literally, small day), that is on the next day after the burial, in a new basket, a potful of water is poured over the grave, and a stone is planted above the head. Milk is poured over the stone first by the widow or widower and then by the relations. The balls of rice are left at the corners of the grave. A great funeral feast is given on the *Pedda-Dinam* (literally, big day), which falls on the twenty-first day after the death. All the afore-named customs are common to Manchi and Challa Enadis alike.

As is the case with all poor men and labourers, Enadis do not shed many tears over their dead. The struggle for the daily bread makes them forget their sorrows. They cannot be sentimental and cannot afford long mourning. Even on the second day after burying their nearest, men go out for work and think of the morrow. They do not brood over the past as deeply as the well-to-do people do. They control their tears in sullen silence and proceed to their normal avocations with stoic indifference.

### VIII. WORSHIP

The Enadis have no special tribal gods. They worship the deities of the Hindu pantheon. They wear the caste marks of the Hindus and copy them in all ceremonials as far as cheapness enables them. They call themselves Vaishnavas and Saivas and offer sacrifices to the village deities as well. Their favourite is *Chenchu-devudu* (Chenchu-god or god of the Chenchus), who is installed in the shape of a wooden idol, a strict vegetarian and does not demand costly animal sacrifices. They keep apart a small hut for Lord Venkateswara whom also they largely worship. This hut is called God's hut and is always kept neat and clean and adorned with fancy-coloured designs. The Enadi, if he is a soothsayer as well, uses his hut for his communion with God which he calls *Sode*. Other deities like Sri Subramanya, the Serpent God, Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and Sri Narasimha also command his ungrudging allegiance. Whenever he wants to propitiate the non-vegetarian section of the deities he willingly offers one of his fowls of which he has plenty owing to his particular aptitude in rearing poultry.

### IX. SODE

*Sode* is the name of the elaborate communion the Enadi professes to have with the gods. It corresponds perhaps to the functions of the Druids of early Britain. *Sode* results from the

rooted belief of the Enadis in the efficacy of prayer to alleviate all human sufferings, physical or mental. The Enadi takes to it for giving relief not only to his relations and fellow-Enadis but at the request of other Hindus of even higher castes who come all the way to the Enadi's lonely hut and spend the night there. Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the best days for soothsaying.

There cannot be *Sode* without the Enadi's wife taking part in it. She repeats the chant in a shrill, musical voice, almost at the end of every line of the inspired prose-verse sung by the husband, who keeps time to the regular beat of the round drum.

The *Sode* is held inside the hut set apart for the gods. It begins after nightfall beside the blazing fire which is continuously fed throughout the night by the soothsayer's wife. It usually lasts till the early hours of the morning, by which time the Enadi comes out of the trance into which he enters some time after midnight. What he utters during the trance is taken for the divine word. It is always in direct language addressed to the sufferer and usually begins and ends with the words of warning: 'You have all these days neglected me, you do not care to worship me, you have fallen on bad ways and in your vanity forgotten your family gods. Propitiate me adequately or ruin will be yours.' The prayer invokes Lord Venkateswara who appears to be the presiding deity over the *Sode* and then minor gods follow. The language used on the occasion is slightly different from the common, the soothsayer trying to place himself all the while on a higher plane. His feeble and unsuccessful affectation of the language of the Brahmin priest is evident. The usual cocoanut is broken, flowers are offered and the *Sode* ends with prayer offered to the gods by all those that are present. The soothsayer usually charges a rupee for his night-long labours though well-to-do people willingly pay more.

It is no easy task to become a soothsayer. One has to spend three weeks with a *guru* or teacher, living in great austerity. He should not speak to his wife or be in her company during the period. Either his parents or sisters can administer to his needs. He should discard meat and must live on milk, fruits and nuts. On the twenty-second day a sort of marriage is performed for him and his wife with the bridal crown, auspicious rice and music. Vermilion water is poured over them and a feast is given to the *guru* and the elders. Then the party go out for hunting to a neighbouring forest or stage a show of hunting in the dwelling localities. The disciple presents new clothing to the teacher and his wife and pays them a cash of five to six rupees. Then both the *guru* and disciple enter water, chin-deep, and there the *guru* passes on his powers to the disciple. It is supposed that from now on the *guru* begins to lose part of his powers and the disciple gets initiated into



the secrets of the art. Sometimes at the time of initiation the disciple bathes in sea water and invokes the gods with burning charcoal in his folded hands. The deity is believed to appear to him in the form of a shadow and inspire him.

The soothsayer sometimes even threatens the god after whom the patient or sufferer is called, to change the name if he does not cure the complaint. The Enadis believe that such threats often bear fruit.

## X. THE DANCE

Next to a sumptuous meal the Enadi loves a dance most. The spirit of play and merriment is ingrained in him. It is in his very marrow and blood. Often finishing his frugal evening meal before darkness falls or in the flicker of the glowing embers, consisting of salted rice gruel with chillie paste to the point, the Enadi moves out of his hut to the open and then revels the night long with the starry sky as his canopy. His skin bears all weathers from biting cold to scorching heat and the chills of the night have no scare for him. It is only when he is exhausted that he stretches himself at full length on the scrappy mat or on the bare ground. He has a special liking for the moon and in the moonlight even the children forget to sleep.

To an outsider the music of the Enadi is a monotonous drone. His drum produces always an effect which sounds like *dubunk-dubunk*, and there is no variation from it. As the song which invariably accompanies it goes into the air, young and old leap into dance, joining the chorus with unbridled joy. There are no sad faces then and no tears from sorrowing eyes. Even tiny tots of three to four raise their steps and prance about. From the accounts available this crude form of music has not undergone any change in the past eighty to ninety years.

The dance of the women differs materially from that of the men. Groups of women stand in a circle and bending to the front and clapping their hands at regular intervals, time their steps to the tune of the song and move round and round like a merry-go-round. Instead of bending to the front they lean to the sides sometimes and clap their neighbour's hands. As the song gains momentum, as the spirits of the dancers rise and as the tune goes tripping, they leap into the air in an orderly fashion with the agility of the forest deer.

The dance of the men consists of throwing forward hands and feet in rapid succession, keeping time to the music. They sometimes catch hold of a stick two feet long in both the hands and frequently draw it towards their stomachs from various directions. There is a vigorous movement of all the limbs of the body from head to foot. No special dress is put on and no disguises are worn at these communal dances.

Within the past twenty years, the Enadis have taken to the country-stage. After the crops are cut, batches of Enadis, males and females, equipped with all the paraphernalia necessary for a country-stage, tour the country giving performances of puranic dramas and singing melodiously the latest Cinema tunes. The members of these parties are literate, get by heart speeches and dialogues allotted to them and, above all, pronounce words in strictly grammatical and orthodox styles. They charge fifteen to twenty rupees for the whole performance and usually specialise in five or six plays. They have nowadays even an elevated stage screened and provided with curtains. Males take female characters and sing with exquisite voices. They use ornaments made of coloured pith and beads and wear crowns and shoulder ornaments after the puranic fashion. Nowadays women play the heroine and lend the "screen-touch" to the performances. When males alone take part in the play the women sit behind the screen and, picking up the threads of the unfinished tune, lengthen the tune with their fine and melodious voices, giving respite to the exhausted actors. The 'Vidushaka' fills the play with sparkling humour and wit. The Enadis are very fond of rhyme and alliteration which mark every one of their folk songs. The Enadi woman for one thing is made for music and the music is certainly made for her. She can pick up the tune with as much facility as she can pick out the thorn from inside the prickly-pear fruit. She has a rich voice. She has a perfect formation of the body, the result of toil and contentment, strong, elastic and enduring. She is modest, affable and lively. She has dark bow-like eyebrows overshadowing deep sparkling eyes and a pair of not too thin lips covering two regular rows of pearl-white teeth. Her somewhat dark complexion need not prevent us from calling her beautiful.

#### XI. OCCUPATION

As all the Enadis are houseless, they are landless also. Though half a century back they could not be induced to take to land, now the bulk of them have become agricultural labourers. Here and there you see them as farm servants, head farm servants managing and directing pretty big farms for their masters. The general impression among agriculturists is that he is not as efficient as the Harijan but is milder and less assertive.

It was a wonder in the beginnings of the twentieth century to see an Enadi employed as a forest ranger or as a police constable. It was so till the other day. There is now a general awakening in the community owing to the progressive times and chiefly owing to the Harijan movement which has been educating thousands of Harijans. The ambition for a higher status seized the community as a whole as well as individual members. Several are being employed as constables, forest watchers, salt peons and office peons.

Most of the scavengers in some of the districts of Andhra are Enadis belonging to the Challa section. A great number of the sweepers in Guntur, Chittoor and Nellore districts are Enadis. Those living in the Guntur, Krishna and Godavari districts are employed as night watchers in villages by the ryots. The Manchi Enadis serve as cooks in the Reddi families. The Enadi women are employed as domestic servants wherever they happen to reside. In towns every family employs a maidservant paying her one to two rupees each per month and giving her one meal or one anna worth of rice per day. They are neat, hard working and intelligent and do their work with great alacrity. Enadis of the Chittoor District and those living in Venkatagiri Estate prepare charcoal out of forest fuel and supply the same to contractors. In the Nellore District which has a population of more than a lakh, they are employed as watchmen in the fields, in the backyards and in the gardens. Some in deltaic areas assist professional washermen. A few live by splitting cashew nuts raw, the offensive oil of which spills over the hands and burns the skin. A new occupation has opened itself to able-bodied Enadis within the past three years in rickshaw pulling which is on the increase in the Andhra districts. The *jatka* (horse-carriage) and bullock cart have yielded place to the cheaper rickshaw which is giving livelihood to hundreds of young men who are able to earn two to three times their previous earnings. Several are employed by the police in the detection of crime. They are experts in tracing footprints and have been for the past fifty years employed in detection work. It is a common belief that thieves hesitate to burgle a house when an Enadi keeps watch, unless he connives with them or is overpowered by numbers. He can see very well in darkness and can accomplish his task noiselessly.

The Labour Department's help has been taken in providing wells, schools, pathways and house-sites for the Enadis.

## XII. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

It is hazardous to venture generalizations about a large class of people like the Enadis, who may number to-day more than two lakhs. It will be as foolish to call them all angels as it would be foolhardy to list them as a criminal tribe. All that can be said is that they are as normal as any other class of people that inhabit this land. Even the Police admit that hunger and poverty usually induce an Enadi to thief, and humorously remark that one of the surest ways by which they can trace house-breaking to an Enadi is by the remnants of a hearty though hasty meal that he invariably allows himself in or near the house where the theft takes place, or before he gets away with the booty.

The Enadis as a rule are less addicted to drink than other labouring classes. It may be so because they are poorer and work

less hard. The Christian missionary must be said to have totally failed with the Enadi. The number of Enadi converts to Christianity in the Nellore and Chittoor districts is nil, while their number in or near the missionary-managed reformatory settlements, where proselytization is vigorously attempted and even naively forced, is only a handful. He is very conservative in his worship as he is in every other thing.

The clearing of forests for fuel and the enactment of severe forest laws has proved a death-knell to the Enadi's freedom and self-dependence. When he cleared the forest patch and reaped the wild paddy, threaded the mountain path and had his savoury gruel in the recesses of the shady jungles and in the midst of fun and frolic, he was undoubtedly much more happy than when he walked the tarred and sticky roads, idled on the cemented street pavements, swept the dusty municipal streets, loitered in front of eating houses or huddled in the slums. The impact of a modern civilization has hushed his voice, deprived him of his song, driven him to the outskirts and branded him with the humiliating heritage of a criminal.

It is preposterous for anyone to claim that he is going to 'uplift' the Enadi community. The Enadi will thank him for not further interfering with the remnants of his freedom and not directing at him a patronising scorn. It does not mean that Enadis should not be educated, should not be decently housed and should not be enabled to own and cultivate their own land. But it does mean that his cherished social laws, his easy though honourable system of divorce, his partiality for freedom and pleasure and lastly his spirit of pristine contentment and happiness should not be destroyed. If he refuses to become a factory hand, you need not curse him. If he does not covet Government service, you need not despise him, and if he does not travel by train, ride in a bus, or wield the pen, you need not pity him. By all means teach him handicrafts, develop his native culture, allow him his traditional worship and provide him with the requirements of a happy and healthy life. We have no right to impose our own new-fangled ideas of decency, good manners and morals upon him. If he takes to them of his own accord, it is quite another matter. The Enadi has patience, perseverance, forgiveness, gratitude and a passionate faith in those that offer him a helping hand. He has all the qualities of a great race and need no longer be our despair.

# MIGRATION

## A STUDY OF THE TRADITIONAL ORIGIN OF THE DRAVIDIAN PEOPLES OF TRAVANCORE

BY L. A. KRISHNA IYER

MIGRATION is of two kinds, migration from one section of a country to another, or movement from rural districts to urban centres.<sup>1</sup> I propose to confine myself to a treatment of the larger aspect of migration from one section of a country to another.

Migration, when reduced to its simplest form, is caused by an expulsion and an attraction, the former resulting from a dearth of food or from over-population, while the latter comes to the same thing. Sooner or later, a time comes, when the population of a country exceeds its normal food supply.<sup>2</sup> With migrating races, we associate enterprise, hopefulness and courage. It indicates a willingness to part with friends and relations, to break with traditions and customs, and make adjustments to new conditions. The history of past migrations of peoples from the Chola and Pandyan kingdoms to Travancore does not disclose any evidence to prove that over-population or dearth of food supply was the cause of migration.

It has been suggested that many migrations have been undertaken for some political and religious reasons.<sup>3</sup> This is true of the Vellalas of Ajanad who came to the Travancore hills owing to political turmoils in Madura.

Immigration has become a world movement with improved means of transportation. It represents a shift in population from old thickly populated countries with few opportunities to new sparsely settled countries with many opportunities. Being a comparatively modern means of distribution of population, immigration does not fall within the ambit of this enquiry.

Tradition is the product of conceptual thought. The products of the thinking of past generations are stored up, transmitted and retained. Additions are made to the store and improvements are made in the method of storing. Tradition is thus cumulative.<sup>4</sup> Tradition stands as the natural background of history. It is an axiom that all tradition is based on fact. The primitive history of every race or tribe is found to consist entirely of traditions. The scientific historian is bound to sift them carefully and scrupulously to arrive at whatever modicum of truth they may contain. Progress in tradition may be stimulated by contact of man with man and race with race. The greater the contact, the more quickly and easily is the existing mass of tradition disseminated throughout any society. The influence of contact of race with race has given rise to a large number of traditions in South India. It is now my endeavour to trace the course of past migrations of some of the Dravidian castes from the Chola and Pandyan kingdoms to Travancore through traditions now current among them.

### I

#### THE NAYARS

The Nayars are in the heart of the Dravidian country and possibly belong to the Naga race. As evidence of connection between the Nagas and Dravidians, a grove is found in the south-west corner of each Nayar house in South India. One such grove near Travancore is the property of a family whose ancestors are said to have been spared when the Krishna forest of the Punjab was burned by Krishna and Arjuna. Each male member of the family was called Vasuka, the name of the king of Patala, the great city

<sup>1</sup> Duncan, *Race and Population Problems*.

<sup>2</sup> Haddon, *The Wandering of Peoples*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem*, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

of the Nagas. The men are priests of the temple, and the women of the family carry images of serpents in procession.<sup>1</sup> They belong to the Dravidian race, but contain a large admixture of Aryan blood. It is now no wonder that they are a mixed race of Aryans and Dravidians, as the Nambutiris who settled down in Kerala have been from time immemorial marrying the Nayar women. Before the advent of the Aryans to South India, the Dravidians were divided into five groups and each of them developed a separate region and developed a culture and mode of life in their environments. The group which occupied the Kurinji or hilly country on the west coast were probably the forefathers of the present Nayar community. While living in the jungles, they lived by hunting. Later on they migrated to the low country between the sea and the mountains and took to cultivation. The land there was fertile and the climatic conditions were eminently favourable to agriculture. Cultivation was an easy task and it naturally became the occupation of women who remained at home. The men had to guard the rich country against foreign intrusion. Circumstances therefore forced them to develop martial qualities which they inherited from their ancestors.

According to Mr. T. K. Krishna Menon, Malabar was the headquarters of the Nagas of South India.<sup>2</sup> It is still the part where Naga worship prevails on a large scale. In the gardens attached to their houses, a cobra (Naga) shrine is invariably found. The Naga worship looks like organized cult. Some think that the top knot of the Nayar is symbolical of the serpent's hood. In the various countries of the Far East, which have been influenced by Indian civilization, we find the Nagas in literature and art in Ceylon, Java, China and Japan. The most essential part of Naga religion is the worship of the Earth both as god and goddess, the giver and maintainer of life, and the adoration of the snake as the Earth-god's special emblem. The Nagas with their token as serpent spread throughout India from Takshasila to Assam on one side and to South India and Ceylon on the other. In South India the Nagas rose to prominence, not only in parts of Ceylon, but ancient Malabar was occupied by them. Apparently the Nagas had become merged with the Kerala people who rose to power since the commencement of the Christian era. Tamil writers apply the term to a warlike race armed with bows and arrows and famous as freebooters. They were a martial race, matriarchal. Some scholars identify Nayannar with Naganmar, the plural forms of Nahar and Naga respectively, and consider the latter as the Proto-Dravidians.<sup>3</sup>

## II

### THE NANJANAD VELLALA

The Nanjanad Vellala have quite an interesting account of their migration to Travancore. Once a shepherd, who was living to the west of Aramboli, desired to celebrate the marriage of his daughter, Auvai. The celestial yogini commanded her devotees, Cheran, Cholan, and Pandyan, to go to the spot and conduct the ceremony themselves. So it was done. When they asked for permission to come back to their country, they were told that the wild region lying to the west of Muppandal was a very fertile territory and they could assume sovereignty. Subsequently, many families from Pandyan migrated to this land and cleared the jungle by degrees, colonised it, and gave it the name of Nanjanad.<sup>4</sup> Evidence contained in ancient Tamil literature goes to show that the Vellalas were originally of

<sup>1</sup> Perry, *The Children of the Sun*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> N. Kunjan Pillai, *The Travancore Census Report* (1931), Vol. I, p. 375.

<sup>3</sup> T. K. Krishna Menon, *Dravidian Culture in Kerala*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>4</sup> V. Nagamiah, *The Travancore State Manual*, p. 1.

the same tribe. According to Mr. Gopinatha Rao, the word Venad is composed of Vel and Nad, the land of Vels or chiefs, and the ancient Sangam literature shows that the Velirs or Vels, who were a fighting class, were brought to the Dravidian land from Dwarasamudra. There is evidence to show that the people of Malaimandala of the Sangam literature, had taken up military service under the Cholas and the Pandyan and received distinction and that in their origin they are therefore to be identified with the Vells or Vellalas. They are said to have come from Madura in the first century A.D., and those in Shencotta along with the Pandalam chiefs, while those found in Parur claim Valliyur and Palghat as their original homes. A large part of Tinnevely once formed an integral part of Travancore and there is so much in common between Nanguneri and Nanjanad that it is possible that most of the families of Nanjanad Vellalas came from Nanguneri.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE VELLALAS OF SHENCOTTA

It is said that Parvati asked Paramasiva whether there would be light in this world but for the Sun and the Moon. Paramasiva said that the Sun and the Moon owed their light to the lustre of his two eyes, whereupon Parvati shut his two eyes, and it was all darkness. She felt sorry for her action and Paramasiva showed her light through his third eye which was only visible to her. Parvati sought the forgiveness of her lord and prayed to him to dispel darkness. He asked her to go to Thiruvallur and offer prayers to him. He wanted some help for her puja, and he asked her to bathe, offer ablutions, and call out “இழைஞ்ஞா.” She did so, when sprang the Vellalas, the Siva Pillais or Gangakula Saivar. From Thiruvallur they spread to Shencotta and other parts of South India. There are now four divisions :

1. Puvasyar—The Vellalas.
2. Dhanavasyar—The Chettis.
3. Karkathans—The Chettis.
4. Mudaliars.

#### IV

##### THE TAMIL SUDRAS

The Tamil Sudras state that they came from Tinnevely *via* Shencotta, and settled themselves in Kaipattur, Kottangal, Cheruvalli, Chirakadavu, and Mattakara. They claim that they form one of the branches of the Nanjanad Vellalas, but there is now no intermarriage between them. There is a tradition that one of the kings of Tinnevely sought the hand of one of their women. To avoid any possible clash, they left bag and baggage and settled down in different parts of the Quilon and Kottayam divisions. They pride themselves that they have no connection with the Nayars, as they were matriarchal. The women used to wear shelas (coloured cloth). This is now disappearing.

#### V

##### THE VELLALAS OF THODUPUZHA

There are two divisions of the Vellalas in the mountainous taluq of Thodupuzha. They are known by the name of Tenkanchi and Kumbakonam Vellalas. The former is called Anjuttikar (five hundred) and the latter Munnuttikar (three hundred) in reference to the number of families which originally settled down in Thodupuzha. The Tenkanchi Vellalas appear to have originally come from Tenkasi taluq of Tinnevely. It is said to be

<sup>1</sup> N. Kunjan Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

due to the demand of a Vaduka ruler for the hand of a woman of the community in marriage. The Kumbakonam Vellalas believe that they migrated to Travancore about the commencement of the Malabar era from Kumbakonam to Tanjore.

## VI

## THE VELLALAS OF ANJANAD

The Vellalas of Anjanad trace their migration to Travancore to the story of Kovalan and Kannaki, who have been immortalised in the Epic of the Anklet. Briefly told, the story runs as follows: In the city of Pukar *alias* Kaveripoompattanam lived two merchant princes, Mahasattuvan and Manayakkan. It was arranged between them that Kovalan, the son of the former, should be married to Kannaki, the daughter of the latter. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony. Some time elapsed when Kovalan felt a passion for Madavi, deserted his home and loving wife, and spent some years with Madavi. He lost all his wealth. Wiser counsels prevailed in the end, and he returned to his lovely wife. He proposed that they should go to Madura, the capital of the Pandyanas.

The idea behind the move was that Kovalan was to sell one of her anklets and with the proceeds retrieve their lost fortune by trade. To this, Kannaki agreed, and they reached Madura. Leaving his wife in the house of a shepherdess, he walked in the streets of Madura to dispose of one of the anklets. He met a goldsmith, Vannithattan, a rogue of the first water, who was suspected of having stolen an anklet from the palace. On seeing the anklet, he found it a capital opportunity for clearing himself of the suspicion against him, went straight to the palace, and informed the king that he had found out the thief who stole the anklet. The king ordered Kovalan to be beheaded without an enquiry, and it was done promptly.

Before leaving home, Kovalan had left a sandal mark on a lime and told his devoted wife that, if it faded, she might infer that some mishap had befallen him. Kannaki found it faded, and she forthwith went after her husband. She came to know of his death without enquiry. She flung to the winds her innate modesty, walked boldly to the palace, and rang the bell of justice. This alarm aroused the suspicion of the hall-porter that something had gone wrong. The unusual apparition of a young uninjured woman was reported to the king. Kannaki proved to the hilt that the anklet for which her husband was killed was hers. The queen corroborated the statement.

Kannaki then invoked a curse that Madura be consumed with fire for the remissness of the king. A large number of Vellalas and Kollans are said to have fled to the Travancore hills *via* Korangani, and that the hamlet of Kottathatti marks the signpost of their past migration. At the instance of the Vellalas, the Kollans were extirpated, and the Vellalas settled down in different parts of the Anjanad valley.

As stated above, the story is called the Epic of the Anklet by S. Krishnaswami Iyengar in his "Celebrities of Tamil Literature." It is related in *Chandamama* and is traced to the first century of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the Vellalas came to Anjanad in the first century A.D.

## VII

## KANDI VELLALAS

The Kandi Vellalas aver that they came from Kandi in Ceylon. They were an indigent people who thought that they could make a better living

<sup>1</sup> T. Chelvakesavaya Mudaliar, *Kannaka Charitam*, pp. 122-24.



in Travancore. They came and settled down in Tamarakulam, Rajakamangalam, and other places. The earliest Tamil works tell us that there were two sections among the Velirs or pure Dravidians, the cultivating and non-cultivating. In the earliest Tamil Grammar extant, Tolkappiyam, in the first and second century B.C., singles out the Vellalas and says that they have no other calling than the cultivation of the soil. There he does not say they are Sudras but indirectly implies that the ordinary Vellalas should be reckoned as Sudras, and that those Vellalas who were kings should be honoured as Kshatriyas.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sendan-Divakaran of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the occupation of the Vellalas is given as (1) tilling, (2) cow-breeding, (3) trade, (4) playing on drums, (5) weaving, (6) service to Brahmans. In the Madras Census Report, 1871, they are described as 'frugal, and industrious people, and have no equals in the cultivation of rice, betel, and tobacco. They form the backbone of Nanjanad.'

### VIII

#### THE IZHAVAS

The Izhavas claim to have come to Travancore from Ceylon. The term Izhava is said to mean those living in Izham, a corruption of Simhalam, one of the old names of Ceylon. Jaffna is said to have been known by the name of Izham and from this place the Izhavas are believed to have originally proceeded to Malabar.<sup>2</sup>

Local tradition points out that Izhathu Raja came to see Kerala, and found it suitable for growing the cocoanut palm. It may be said in parenthesis that the cocoanut tree is not indigenous to India, and that cocoanut is not mentioned in the list of exports from Malabar given in the Periplus in the first century A.D. Izhathu Raja is said to have asked the ruler whether he would give some land for cultivation of the cocoanut palm. The request was granted and four men came. They planted the cocoanut palm, which grew so well that they were respected by others. Being bachelors, they married with the assent of the Raja. He who married a Sudra woman belonged to Matambi illom, while the man who married a Marar woman belonged to Yogeswara illom. He who married a Variyar woman belonged to Kalluvazhi illom. Lastly, the man who married a Brahman woman belonged to Muthanvaka illom. It so happened that the Raja of Izhathunad was getting no return from his gardens, and he ascertained the cause and recalled the men. Their wives and children remained and they came to be known as Izhavas. The Syrian Christians have a tradition that the Izhavas were invited to settle down on the West Coast at their suggestion.

In the Mackenzie manuscripts, we read a Ghandarva woman had seven sons from whom the Izhavas were descended. Another story says that a Pandyan princess named Alli married Narasimha, a Raja of the Carnatic. The royal couple migrated to Ceylon and settled themselves as the sovereigns of the country. When that line became extinct, their relations and adherents returned to the old country where they have since remained. But apart from tradition, it is possible that the original habitat of the Izhava was the island of Ceylon, as the etymology of the caste name goes to show.<sup>3</sup>

Some scholars fix Siam as the original home of the Tiyyas on the analogy of the word Tiyyan which is the name given to a particular kind of ruby found in Siam. Caldwell says, 'It is tolerably certain that the Izhavas and Tiyyans who cultivate the cocoanut palms of Travancore are the descendants of the Shanans of Travancore.'

<sup>1</sup> Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. VI, p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Vol. II, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> N. Subramania Iyer, *The Travancore Census Report*, 1931, p. 278.

## IX

## THE SHANANS

The Shanans are found in the southern taluqs of Travancore and are most numerous in the Tamil districts adjacent to Ceylon. Shanans have taken the place of the Izhavan in the Tamil districts and in South Travancore. From a few stray hints in Tamil literature and tradition, we infer that the Shanans belong to a wave of war-like adventurers, who came from North India. The original tract is said to be between the Krishna and the Godavari rivers. Caldwell thinks that they were immigrants from the north of Ceylon. The Shanans say that they are descended from the Chera, Chola, and Pandyan kings. Shanans are not found in early literature. In the inscriptions of Raja Chola (984—1013 A.D.), toddy-drawers are known as Izhavas. The Chudamani Nikandu of the sixteenth century adds Samudikar from which the name Shanar arose.<sup>1</sup> As late as the thirteenth century, the Shanans were known as Izhuvans, and a tax called Izhaputchi was levied by the Tamil kings on all toddy-drawers. They were surely a polluting caste as they are now.<sup>2</sup> They appear to have migrated to the southern taluqs of Travancore from the Tamil district. Eranial has the largest number of them. They are found in Agastiswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode, and Neyyathumkara taluqs.

## X

## THE KAMMALARS

The Kammalars are divided into two classes: (a) the Tamil Kammalars and (b) the Malayala Kammalars. (a) *The Tamil Kammalars* are found in South Travancore and in Shencotta. They are also found in small numbers in other parts of the State. According to the Viswapuranam, god Parameswara opened his third eye, where Viswagana was born. He had five sons, Janaka, Sanathana, Apuvanasu, Pratinasa and Swarnasa. They are the originators of the five crafts. Some were engaged in smithy work and were called Manu. Others devoted themselves to carpentry and were called Maya. Some were engaged in stone carving. They were called Silpis. Those who did metal work were called Twastras, while those who made ornaments were known as Viswagnas. The modern Kammalars claim to be their descendants. The five sections wear the sacred thread. The Tanjore inscriptions of the great Raja Chola dated 1004 A.D. show that the Paraiyas, Kammalas, Izhavas, and Vannans were all considered polluting castes, as they are at present in Malabar and Travancore.<sup>3</sup> The five artisans, potters, and weavers were much requisitioned by all castes, high and low, and these industries consequently tended to bring them in closer contact with the Brahmans. With the rise of temples and religious institutions, the social status of these classes began to improve. Brahmans humoured them and made them willing workers in their social organization. All these were given the privilege of wearing the sacred thread.

(b) *The Malayala Kammalars*.—The Kammalars of Malabar and the Tamil districts must have descended from the same stock of Naga-Dravidian artisans, mentioned in early Tamil literature and inscriptions, though the former retained their original distance pollution, while the latter has risen so far in the social scale as to claim equality with the Brahmans.<sup>4</sup> Epigraphic records point to the existence of five classes of Kammalars in Malabar as early as the ninth century A.D. as a Syrian Christian grant refers to them as Aimvazhi Kammalars.<sup>5</sup> They do not claim to be Brahmans

<sup>1</sup> *Castes and Tribes of Travancore*, Vol. VI, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> M. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Tamil Studies*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>6</sup> Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 136.

nor do they wear the sacred thread. They accept the position of a polluting caste, and have no entry in temples.

It is said that one of the Perumals pressed the Kammalars to marry women of the washerman caste, which they refused. They went away to Ceylon and refused to return in spite of entreaties. At last the Izhava king sent some Kammalars to Malabar. Even to this day, in Kammalar marriages, presents from Izhavas are accepted. They are also invited for dinner. In Travancore, the five artisan classes are the Asari, Musari, Thattan, Kollan, and Kallan. Though the names signify their occupations, they have crystallized themselves into different sub-castes having no inter-dining nor inter-marriage with each other. The Tamil Kammalars neither inter-dine nor inter-marry with the Malayala Kammalars.

## XI

### THE KRISHNAVAGAKAR

The Vagakar are found in Eraniel in South Travancore. Tradition traces them to a place called Ampadi, the place of Sri Krishna's birth and early boyhood, whence they are said to have migrated first to Conjeevaram, and thence to Travancore. It seems that they presented to the then king of Travancore an image of Sri Krishna, which they had brought with them from North India. The Maharaja commanded same to be placed in the Thiruvampadi temple in the pagoda of Padmanabhaswami. Their leader was called Anantha Padmanabha Kshetra Pallava Rayan as a mark of royal favour. The management of the temple of Krishna was presented to them and they were permitted to stay in Vachiyoor.<sup>1</sup>

## XII

### THE PATTARYAR

The Pattaryar are found in the Shertalai and Vaikam taluqs as well as in South Travancore. They claim to be Vaisyas and state that they were once known as *Vadavayars* which is indicative of the fact that their original home was on the banks of the Ganges.<sup>2</sup> It is said that they came to Kerala from Conjeevaram during the time of Cheraman Perumal for the purpose of providing him with *chidrapada pattu* or *mantravatsiam* on the occasion of his coronation. They first settled down in the Cochin State at Thiruvanchikulam. It is said that they then came to Travancore at the instance of Vadakumkur Raja, and settled themselves in the taluqs of Vaikam and Shertalai. It is also said they formerly resided in Quilon and emigrated to the south and colonized in Kazhakuttam, Eraniel, and Kottar.

According to the Pattaryars of the north, the term Pattaryar means the Aryas who made silk. Till about fifty years ago, they had the title of Chetty. This is now abandoned in favour of Pillai. There are three divisions of Pattaryars : <sup>3</sup>

1. Kerala Pattaryars got down from North India.
2. Kalakad Pattaryars.
3. Kottar Pattaryars.

This classification leaves out of account the Pattaryars of the north. They do not identify themselves with the Chaliars whom they consider to be inferior to them.

## XIII

### THE VAIRAVI PANDARAM

The Vairavis were formerly known as Vairagis which later assumed the corrupt form of Vairavi. They claim to have come from Madura about

<sup>1</sup> V. Nagamiah, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 370-371.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

five hundred years ago. The story goes that one of the priests of Sunchidram temple made away with some of the ornaments of the deity to the present British India. He was intercepted at Madura by the Vairavis, who recovered the ornaments and took them to Sunchidram. In gratitude thereof, the temple authorities made a grant of 23 kottas of land to 23 men whose descendants enjoy it even to this day. From Suchindram, they are said to have spread throughout Travancore and are now found in Neduvangad, Kottarakara, Agastiswaram, Mavelikara, and Shencotta. They have temple service in Nagercoil, Cape Comorin, and Paraka. They talk Tamil in Agastiswaram, and Malayalam farther north of Neduvangad.

In the Madras Census Report of 1901, Vairavi is retained as a sub-caste of Pandaram, and they are found only in Tinnevely District, where they are measurers of grains and pujaris in village temples.<sup>1</sup>

## XIV

## THE VELAR

In former times, a sacrifice was conducted by the Devas, who placed five vessels of five different metals on the sacrificial fire; the vessels began to melt. The Devas were in a quandary and they sought the help of the sage Kulala, who was doing penance under a banyan tree. He made vessels by means of Vishnu's chakra. The descendants of the sage were called Kulalar of Velar (those who puddle clay and make pots). They wear the sacred thread. They are said to have come from Tinnevely to South Travancore and to Shencotta.

The Velars were requisitioned by all castes, and their occupation brought them into closer contact with the Brahmans, to whom they owe their elevation and the privilege of wearing the sacred thread. The Malayala Velars do neither inter-dine nor inter-marry with the Tamil Velars.

## XV

## THE VANIYAN

The Vaniyans claim to be Vaisyas and quote the passage from Purushasukta in support of their contention. Tradition has it that Takkarasan had 27 stars (damsels) who were married to the Moon, who was fond of Karthiga and Rohini. This enraged others who complained to Takkarasan. He cursed the Moon, and it was all darkness. The Devas complained to god Parameswara, who asked them to fetch Vakkuvamuni. The sage was told that all this trouble was the result of his leading a life of single blessedness and he was desired to marry to dispel darkness from the world. He said that he would produce 1,000 children without marriage, and so he did. They were taken care of by goddess Saraswati. It is said that they came from the Chola kingdom to Travancore. The king wanted a pretty girl of theirs for marriage. This was refused and they migrated to the south. It is said that castes like Ambattan, Vaniyan and Vannan were originally occupational guilds consisting of peoples from various tribes which have in course of time become distinct castes.<sup>2</sup> The Vaniyans are oil pressers. For some obscure reason Manu classed oil-pressing as a base occupation and all followers are held in small esteem, and in Tinnevely they are not allowed to enter the temples.<sup>3</sup> Trade in oil is the occupation of the people of the caste, who assert that they are Vaisyas.

<sup>1</sup> Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> M. Srinivasa Iyengar, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 312-315.

## XVI

## THE PARAVAR (BHARATAR)

The Paravar were once a powerful people and gained ascendancy over others by their knowledge of navigation. The Tamil Paravars are fishermen with headquarters at Tuticorin. The Malayala Paravars are shell collectors, lime-burners, and gymnasts, and their women act as midwives. They are found along the coastal regions of South Travancore and inland elsewhere.

The original home of the Paravar is said to be Ayodhya. It appears that, prior to the Mahabharata war, they inhabited the territory bordering on the Yamuna or Jumna. It has been suggested that the West Coast Paravars are the descendants of those who fled from Tinnevely. Inscriptions found in Cape Comorin testify to the high social status of the Paravar. An inscription about 800 years old in the temple at Cape Comorin testifies to the high power and position of their chief, Villavayan. They formerly lived at Kumarimuttam and were converted by Rev. Vaz and St. Francis Xavier.

It is commonly agreed that the Polynesian race came from the west, probably from India. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that the people of Polynesian types still live in India and Indonesia. Hornell's monographs on Indian boat designs contain a photograph of a man of the Paravar caste of Tuticorin, the fishermen of South India, which shows boat designs. Such centres may well have included Galle, Colombo, and Korkai, where the embouchure of large rivers makes fishing remunerative.<sup>1</sup> The Travancore Paravars are at one with the Tamil speaking Paravars. While most of them became converts to Christianity, they have tried to preserve their separate existence.

Varnavar include Pathiyan, Mannan, Ettali, Purathon, Velan, Neriyan, and Paravan, and the difference is occupational. In Mavelikara, Quilon, Kunnathunad, they are called Mannans; Pathiyans, in Thiruvalla; Purathons and Ettali, in Vazhur; Meenatam, Cheruvalli, and Neriyan, in Changanaseri and Haripad. They are called Paravar in Vaikom, Vadayar and Kottayam.

## XVII

## THE SACKARAVAR

The Sackaravar community is found in Vialvancode, Kalkulam, and Agastiswaram taluqs of the State. Besides farming and trade, weaving is their occupation. Tradition has it that they originally came from Kaveripoompatnam, an emporium of trade in the old Chola kingdom, consisting of Trichinopoly, Tanjore, and South Arcot, and that they were then called Saiva Chetty Vellalas. It is said that a king at Kaveripoompatnam borrowed so much money from his minister (Kaviti) that he hit upon the device of marrying one of his daughters to the son of his minister, when he could not return the money. The descendants of the married couple were disowned by the Saiva community and they developed into another community called Kaveripattarakkar and Kaveriyar. By the last name they became confused with the Nadars, barbers to the Nadar community in South India.

From the foregoing account, it may be observed that the Nayars came to Travancore from the north, the Shanans, the Velar, the Vairavi Pandarams, the Kammalar, and the Vellala from Madura and Tinnevely. The Sackaravar, the Vaniyan, the Pattaryan, and the Krishnavagakar came from the Chola kingdom, and the Izhavas from Ceylon. The migrations of these peoples were influenced by political turmoil or social difficulties. Some of these traditions may have been manufactured by the Brahmans to elevate the status of the low but serviceable tribes or by the busy and ingenious artisans, who scarcely let slip an opportunity to elevate their low position. They are the modern representatives of the Dravidians.

<sup>1</sup> Perry, op. cit., p. 105.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

ORIGINAL notes, queries, answers to queries, quotations from journals and newspapers for this section should be sent to Verrier Elwin, D.Sc. (Oxon.), F.N.I., Patangarh P.O., Dindori Tahsil, Mandla District. Contributors are requested to type in double space on one side of the paper only, to give full and exact references and to follow carefully the suggestions 'To Contributors' published from time to time in *Man in India*.

### THE STYE

THE following beliefs about styes in India were recorded by the Rev. E. M. Gordon in the Bilaspur District at the beginning of the century:

'There is a widespread belief that styes are caused by seeing a dog in the act of defecating. And there are several remedies employed to remove a stye. One of the most common remedies is connected with the *Dalhan Pahar*, the hill which occupies such a prominent position as a geographical feature of the district. This hill may be seen at a distance of fifty or eighty miles. The peak of the hill seen at a distance just appearing above the horizon has some resemblance to a stye. The belief is that if a person suffering from a stye should face this mountain and say, "*Dalhan Pahar chota mor sulie bara* (The Dalhan Hill is small, my stye is big)" the hill will be annoyed, the stye will be pleased, and as a result the stye will disappear. Some say that while saying these words, the afflicted person should rub the third finger of the right hand in the palm of the left and apply the finger to the stye. It is also customary to take a grain of the wild rice, apply it to the stye, and then throw it away. As the grain decays the stye will disappear.' E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the people of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District,' *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. I (N.S., 1905), p. 184.

V. E.

### YAJNA AS A MEANS OF WORLD PURIFICATION

THE following note is taken from *The Times of India*, 7 February, 1944:—

The great event in Delhi which represents Hindu religious effort at world purification has attracted widespread attention (not merely among the thousands of Hindus who have flocked here from far and wide). Who initiated the idea of this *yajna*; what does it signify and which scripture sanctions it? These are the questions asked by many.

I interviewed a holy man—the Shankaracharya of one of India's four great *maths* (centres) founded by the original Shri Shankaracharya who revived Hinduism (after a prolonged hold of Buddhism) and established four centres in Mysore, at Puri, Badri Nath and Dwarka, to spread the Hindu religion. Even though these four *maths* and numerous others that have sprung up are now a symbol of faith rather than centres of missionary activity, their heads enjoy considerable prestige among devout Hindus.

The holy man whom I met is the elder brother of the Hon. Dr N. B. Khare. By a strange coincidence the promotion to the highest temporal and spiritual offices of the two brothers occurred simultaneously. It was on February 16, 1943, that Mr Aney resigned and the head of the Dwarka *math* died; it was about the middle of April that both brothers were invited—the one to join the Viceroy's Executive Council and the other to the headship of the *math*, and it was on May 7 that Dr Khare assumed his office as the Member for Indians Overseas and his elder brother was installed as Shankaracharya.

I met the holy man when he had concluded his *pooja* this morning at Dr Khare's residence. I mentioned that his full name and designation is His Holiness Shri Jagadgururambhadracharya Swami Shri Yogeshwaranand Teerthaji Maharaj, Shri Govardhan Math, Puri. He began life as a

school teacher and later qualified and practised as auditor. From 1922 onwards he practised spiritual thought as a 'hobby' until his gifts won his nomination to the spiritual leadership first of the Dwarka *Math* and recently of the Govardhan *Math* at Puri. There was no mistaking his role, for in the corner of the room lay the emblem of his 'office.'

'What is the significance of this *yajna*?' I said.

Replying in fluent English, he said: 'From the temporal point of view these *yajnas* are performed to produce *vayu* (gases) to destroy the evil forces affecting the human body and mind. You may call it "disinfection." In the old days *yajnas* used to be held for 12 years at a stretch. On the spiritual side, recitation of *mantras* from holy Vedas leads to concentration of mind, and the sound waves produce electro-magnetic waves which influence men's minds.'

According to the Shankaracharya, a *yajna* is an over-all remedy for all evils, and different *yajnas* are prescribed for different ailments and calamities. *Yajnas* can, for instance, destroy epidemics such as cholera and plague, and diseases such as cold and cough; it all depends on what ingredients are burnt and what *mantras* are recited to purify the air. The ingredients used in the *yajna* now on in Delhi are ghee, wheat, copra, rice, barley, *til* and *sarson*. Two thousand Brahmins are allotted to 100 pits (*kundas*) and the offering will last until *Gayatri* (Master *mantra*) is chanted ten million times. This key *mantra* means: 'The sun is the centre of the entire universe; all intelligence, all energy and all health is derived from the sun.'

The *yajna* is performed in the morning and in the afternoon, and during the interval the four Hindu Vedas (embracing the universe) are recited by Brahmins, one at each corner of the *Mandap* (*yajna* hall). The performances subscribed by wealthy Hindus, will cost about Rs. 15 lakhs.

I gathered from the Shankaracharya that the last occasion when a *yajna* on the same scale was performed was at the holy city of Benares three centuries ago, when Hindus felt that a calamity had overtaken them through Aurangzeb's bigotry.

The idea of holding the *yajna* in India's capital originated with a *Karpatri* of Benares (meaning a holy person who eats from his hand and does not use utensils). The *Karpatri* felt the need for curing the world of the evil that had involved it in war. It is said that a *brahmacharya* held a small *yajna* near Delhi about eight months ago. At that time the question of an all-India *yajna* was discussed, and search began for one thoroughly versed in the Atharva Veda. Finally one Balaastri Vaidya, of Benares, was consulted, and he certified that the holy book prescribed a detailed method of *yajna* for securing universal peace. The idea was canvassed at various religious centres all over the country and received encouragement. And three months ago certain leading Hindus in Delhi took it up and arranged the accommodation and the wherewithal for the mighty effort.

#### COURAGE OF A GOND WOMAN

STANDARDS of courage among the aboriginals vary greatly from tribe to tribe. The Bison-horn Maria are brave in face of wild animals (cf. W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 160); on the other hand, the Kondhs refuse to join in a beat for tiger and are regarded as very timid. The following report from *The Hindustan Times* describes the bravery of a Gond woman in Rewa State:

REWA, July, 15.—The extraordinary story of a Gond woman successfully defying a bloodthirsty leopard and wresting two people from its clutches has reached here from village Nausa in Rewa State. It appears that a leopard entered a house which was occupied by one Phulla Ahir, his aged mother and his seven-year-old daughter who was sick at the time. The

animal pounced upon the old lady and proceeded to maul her. On her raising an alarm, Salik Ram, a neighbour, came to her rescue, but he had hardly stepped into the house when he was confronted by the leopard which attacked him violently. Taken unawares, the man could hardly offer any resistance. After wounding him fatally, the beast again entered the house, and once again attacked the old lady. Phulla Ahir and his daughter witnessed the ghastly scene, all the time, but were too terror-stricken to shout or move. Meanwhile, a number of persons had collected outside, but no one dared to enter the house where death seemed to lurk at every step.

At this juncture Phulvasia, a Gond woman of the village, happened to reach the spot. She grasped the whole situation in an instant and without a moment's hesitation boldly entered the house—much to the consternation of everybody present, including her husband. But the suspense was shortlived, for the next instant she emerged dragging with her Phulla and his ailing daughter. A cry of joy went through the crowd and, taking their cue from the brave woman, the villagers rushed in and killed the leopard. Phulla Ahir later stated that he and his daughter were only rescued just in time because the leopard would have attacked them as soon as it had finished his mother. 'It gave a loud snarl as the lady proceeded towards me,' said Phulla, 'but unmindful of the risk she caught hold of me and my daughter and literally dragged us outside. But for her we would certainly have been devoured by the leopard.'

In recognition of this extraordinary deed of valour and conspicuous courage in the face of very great danger, which resulted in the saving of two lives, the Rewa Darbar has been pleased to sanction a reward of Rs. 101 to this brave Gond woman.

#### A CURE FOR MAGGOTS

THE high caste Hindus in the Central Provinces consider it to be a great sin to accept any money from a daughter, a niece or indeed from any relation of similar standing. This belief has led to a curious remedy for curing the maggots in the wounds of cattle, a remedy that is often used in and around Mandla town. When a cow or bullock gets maggots in a wound, after all other means have been unsuccessfully attempted, the owner writes the names of seven people who have been sinful enough to take money from their daughters on a piece of paper. He folds it and ties it to the neck of his cow. This must be done early in the morning on a Sunday or a Wednesday, before washing the face or relieving nature. The result of this is that the maggots are sure to leave the wound which will dry up and be cured. The reason is that even maggots refuse to live in the neighbourhood of the names of people who are so sinful as to take money from their own daughters.

R. B. AGARWAL

#### THE BASORS

SOME months ago I overheard a quarrel between a Basor and a Chamar in the course of which the Basor boasted that he was 'the urine of his father.' On asking another Basor the meaning of this, it was explained to me that to claim to be of the father's urine suggests purity of descent. After sometime I heard of a Dhimar woman who had been kept as a wife by a Basor. The Dhimars are a superior caste, from whose hands even caste Hindus can take water. But in spite of this the Basors found themselves faced with the problem—how could they admit her into the Basor caste since she was not 'of the urine of a Basor.' The method adopted by the Panchayat in Mandla was as follows:

A pit was dug about four feet deep and four feet broad. The woman was made to sit in it and the top was covered with a bamboo mat. The members of the Basor Panchayat sat round it and all urinated over the mat and thus indirectly over the unfortunate woman. She was then taken out



and given a bath of purification. In this way she became of the urine of the Basor community and was converted from her higher caste into a lower one.

R. B. AGARWAL

#### NUDITY IN MAGIC

NUDITY is always powerful in magic. The Gonds of Mangli told me how, in order to stop a man-eating tiger, or a dangerous snake, or where a woman gives birth to still-born children, or where twins are frequently born in a family, the magician goes at night to a creeper and makes himself naked as a cow. He winds a thread seven times round it and plucks it. In this village, Samaliya, the wife of Dadua Gond, gave birth to still-born children. The Gunia crossed three streams and picked a creeper while naked. On that night Samaliya and her husband had to fast, and they fed seven unmarried girls. After this the woman had two children. Pathra Gond of Mangli twice had male twins and once female. The same rite was performed and his next child was a single daughter. Pathra was also bitten by a snake, and was cured in the same way.

Dasri, wife of Nanku of Rewan village, gave birth to male twins and then male and female twins. They all died within a short time. After the nudity rite was performed, she gave birth to a son who has lived for three years.

A means of getting children was adopted by a sadhu at Karanjia, Mandla District. He lived by a tank in a little shrine, and many barren women used to visit him. He would tell them to come to him at midnight for seven Sundays running. When they came he would be naked and he would make them naked also. Then they would have to catch him by his organ and take him seven times round the shrine. This continued for some time, and no doubt a number of children were conceived. But at last a woman's husband came to see what was being done and caught the sadhu who was about to have intercourse with his wife, and beat him and drove him away.

SHAMRAO HIVALE

#### BARA DEO

IN the March number of *Man in India*, I raised the question whether it was possible for Bara Deo, the great god of the Gonds, to be associated with the sending of maggots into a wound, for I was under the impression that Bara Deo was not a deity that normally interfered greatly in human affairs. Since then, however, I have found in three different places, association of Bara Deo with ants that burrow and devour. In a Pardhan song, recorded in the Bindra-Nawagarh Zemindari, Bara Deo assists the Raja of Bairagarh by turning himself into a swarm of white ants which undermine the walls of Chanda and lead to its fall. In another Pardhan tale, recorded by Shamrao Hivale in Mandla, the Gond armies invest the fort of a Kavar Raja. He has a great bow which fires an arrow capable of exterminating an entire army at a single shot. Bara Deo and the other Gond gods turn themselves into culm-borers and eat away the inside of the bow so that, the next time the Raja uses it, it breaks and the arrow falls short. In yet another Pardhan tale, also recorded in Mandla, Bara Deo assists a Gond prince, imprisoned by Aurangzib in Delhi, by bringing all the rats in the jungle and digging an underground passage from Delhi to Mandla by which the prince is able to escape in the company of Aurangzib's daughter. These incidents of course are all part of the traditional folk-lore. It is not clear how far the ordinary Gond and Pardhan believes Bara Deo to be capable of such feats to-day.

V, E,

## REVIEWS

W. KOPPERS, *Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and other Primitive Tribes in Central India*. Annali Lateranensi (Citta Del Vaticana, 1942), Vol. VI. 90 pp, 61 illustrations.

Dr Koppers' remarkable interest in the tribal culture of India persists throughout this well-planned and well-executed monograph. It seems very few copies of this monograph are available in India, and the editors of *Man in India* deserve congratulations for securing it through Dr O. R. Ehrenfels for this review.

Dr Koppers spent over one year in scientific research among the aboriginal tribes of Central India during 1939. He spent three months among the Bhils on the Vindhya and Satpura mountains, two months among the Korkus and Nahals of Chikalda in Berar and one month among the Gonds and Baigas in the Maikal range in the Central Provinces. His well-documented and well-illustrated monograph will occupy a permanent place in Indian anthropological literature.

About fifty pages of the monograph are devoted to the dead. The monuments to the dead of the Bhils, Bhili culture occupies but a secondary place in the main thesis, which is a study of the megalith problem. For a scholar of international reputation like Dr Koppers, it is but natural that he should emphasize some such general feature of the culture of the people whom he happened to study for a few months. If this monograph is read in conjunction with his previous article on 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils,' which appeared in *Anthropos*, 1940-41, and which was reviewed in *Man in India* for March, 1943, it would appear that Dr Koppers is working himself up to a definite scheme. While this may help a great idea, it prevents a complete or satisfactory study of any tribe completely. It does not give a complete picture of the tribe, for in emphasizing or generalizing for the purposes of a wider theme, certain important details are left out, often with disastrous effect, causing inaccurate and unfair generalizations. The evolution of megalithic culture may appear a subject of great importance to the student of pre-history but the erection of a few monumental stones by the Bhils and Korkus need not divert the interest from the essential human aspects of their culture. Dolmens, menhirs and erect monumental stones play an important part in the history of the West, and from that point of view, the conclusions of Dr Koppers are important, namely: 'In essential points regarding both content and historical development a fair analogy can be established between the erection of memorials to the dead in present day Central India and that in pre-historic Europe. In searching for another hasty analogy Dr Koppers asserts that 'neither the more primitive tribes, nor the Indus civilization, nor the Aryan Indians can seriously be regarded as the real representatives of megalith culture in Central India. There remains, historically speaking, only a "middle stratum" to which these monuments can be attributed.'

To a student of Indian anthropology these generalizations appear to be both rash and out of place. In a country so vast as India, with its patterns of culture so fluid and so widely varying, where generalizations are so difficult to establish, and wherever the complete study of the pre-historic monuments or of the cultural history of the tribes is yet to be made, it seems to be rather a waste of time and effort to evolve general principles based on certain pre-determined conclusions of European scientists.

On the other hand, we cannot but admire the persistent thoroughness with which Dr Koppers has approached the subject; the funeral rites of the Bhils, Korkus, Mundas, Gonds and the various names by which the monuments are designated, namely: *gato*, *paliya*, *nisham* and *sira* among the memorials of the Bhils, the flat *sasamdari* and the erect *biddiri* memorial stones of the Mundas, the *sidoli* ceremony of the *munda* memorial stone of the Korkus, the *uraskal* (stone menhir monuments), or the *urashaita* (wooden

posts) or the forked bough monuments of the Gonds, and even the *viragals* *virakals*, or *virasasadas*, that is, hero memorial stones found in Kanarese Districts—all provide very interesting and illuminating details of the funeral customs of these people.

Through these discussions, the importance of one statement of Dr. Koppers on page 151 does not seem to have been realized. 'In general, only those are commemorated, who, when [?] a certain social standing (village [?] distinguished warriors, etc.), and whose descendants are [?] to afford this expense.' If this is the [?] these memorials, where is the necessity or justification for [?] megalithic cult? If a visitor to the art galleries of [?] road a monument to an Indian Maharaja who happened to die there, is it justifiable to conclude that all Indians have the megalithic instinct to raise stone memorials to the dead?

In spite of this criticism, Dr Koppers' efforts in studying isolated portions of the cultural life of various tribes will long remain an example of scholarly work. It would, however, be much preferable for an investigator completely to study the life of a single tribe in all its facets rather than take a single facet of various tribes and to compare these single facets only. For example, the worship of the horse by the Bhils, particularly of Gujarat, as Ghoda Deo, is so common, and this horse statue is so frequently used in the funeral rites of the Bhils that it need not have been described by Dr Koppers as having originated from the Rajputs, a tribe which was neither autochthonous nor indigenous and was not known in Indian history till about the eleventh century. Further, while talking of primitive tribes, the author at once switches off to the modern stone monuments of Paliyas in Gujarat, which though commemorative in origin, are not funeral in nature. However, the efforts of scholars like Dr Koppers will be welcome and appreciated in India, if they do not start with certain pre-conceived theories. We trust Dr Koppers will publish his monographs separately and make them easily available in India.

P. G. SHAH

R. F. S. STARR, *Indus Valley Painted Pottery* (Princeton University Press, 1941). Pp. 106—xiii with many line-drawings.

This admirable little volume studies comparatively the designs on the painted wares of the Harappa culture. It is illustrated by nearly 200 excellent line-drawings which are discussed with learning and insight. It is in [?] that the early Indus civilization presents the closest likeness to other Asiatic cultures. It is not surprising that Harappa should have developed this most characteristic of the arts of peace, for 'nowhere in the Ancient East was there a people who seem to have been less baited by princes, priests and war. The amazing absence of what may properly be called palaces and temples, and the scarcity of weapons of offence, attest this. Nowhere in antiquity has life appeared so ordered and secure.' Dr Starr has some interesting remarks on the interpretation of the designs. He shows how the pictographic changes into the symbolic, so that a wavy line comes to represent a river, sweeping curved lines the great horns of a mountain goat, triangles the bodies of animals. 'One should beware, however, of giving to every geometrical unit an inner meaning which actually it may not have had by the time the design was drawn. It is perfectly true that under certain conditions a wavy line between rows of opposed triangles represented a stream flowing between mountains, but that cannot mean that forever after wavy line and triangle held only this meaning.' The same principle must be remembered in the interpretation of folk-poetry.

This book should be read not only by the archæologist but by anyone interested in the art of the modern primitive cultures of India.

V. E.

# MAN IN INDIA

---

Vol. XXIV ]

December 1944

[ No. 4

---

## COMMENT

MORE than any branch of oral literature in India the folk-tale has been collected and studied. A survey of India and neighbouring countries showed that not less than three thousand tales had been recorded, while in the last twenty years Maurice Bloomfield, W. N. Brown, Ruth Nerton and M. B. Emeneau have analysed themes and demonstrated their diffusion. Yet, in spite of this interest, there remain many gaps in knowledge. If collection has frequently been enthusiastic, it has also been unscientific, and even within provinces the recording of folk-tales has often hinged more on accidents of interest or chances of residence than on a planned programme. It is surely anomalous that out of the recorded tales of India, almost ten per cent should come from a single Bihar district, the Santal Parganas, that Santal and Uraon tales should have been noted but no collection of Munda or Kharia stories made, and that in the whole province of Bihar, there is still no record of the Hindu folk-tales of Tirhut, Mithila and Bhojpur. Recorded tales are numerous, but they are still only a fragment of the great mass that is still to be preserved.

If tribal poems are important documents of tribal life, folk-tales are also valuable for the light they throw on tribal cultures. It is true that with the wide diffusion of motifs, there is scarcely any tale that is the sole property of a single tribe. The motif of a Santal tale may appear in a Muria story from Bastar or be paralleled in a Naga tale from Assam. If, therefore, a motif were the whole of a tale, the folk-tales of one tribe would scarcely be distinguishable from those of another. They would show the tribe

as like all others and far from exposing its distinctive culture they would merely obscure its vital differences. In point of fact, this is far from the case and even if a tribe lacks its own motifs, by no means every motif is used by every tribe. It is not the motifs which a tribe invents but the motifs which it uses that are of ethnographic significance.

Moreover, a motif is at most only one element in a tale. More important than the motif itself is the emphasis it receives, the values which the actual telling gives to its details, the purpose it is made to serve. The motif is merely the material for an attitude and it is the attitude in the story that links it distinctively to a tribe. The Santal story of Jhore and Bajun<sup>1</sup> is as distinctively Santal as the Baiga story of The Sadhu's Medicine<sup>2</sup> is Baiga.

But it is not only as a gauge of tribal differences that folk-tales are important. A folk-tale is almost always rigidly traditional and Sibu Hansdak', the famous story-teller in the Santal Parganas, once said that he would learn an old story from another man but he would never invent or learn a new one. In tribal life, a folk-tale is itself a part of custom. It may often seem only a form of compensatory escape but its importance lies in its assertion of the past, its conservation of a tribal way of life. 'Narratives,' said Malinowski in *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, 'always entertain and at times, instruct, but they also fulfil a more important function. A sacred tribal tale told in justification of the social order or of morality, in explanation of a ritual, or to illuminate religious mysteries, such a tale is of the greatest importance in that it systematises belief and regulates conduct. Again a legend, an incident in tribal history may also contribute to the building up of morale. A tale, such as the present narrative, contributes indirectly to the formation of economic standards and values. For,

<sup>1</sup> P. O. Bodding, *Santal Folk-tales*, (Oslo, 1927), Vol. II, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Verrier Elwin, *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 306.

as we have seen, it is the shadow of scarcity, hunger and famine which contributes the most powerful incentive to work in the Trobriands. The whole system of organised work and incentives is associated with the traditional handing on from generation to generation of stories of *molu* and *malia*, of success and failure, of the importance of magic, of work and discipline in gardening. Thus though narratives considered singly might appear idle enough, integrally their function goes far beyond mere amusement and entertainment, and those tales which centre round vital interests, such as hunger and sex, economic values and morality, collectively serve to the building up of the moral tradition of a tribe. The function of speech in them is an important cultural contribution to the social order.'

The importance of folk-tales to anthropology lies precisely in that function.

W. G. A.

# MALTO FOLK-TALES

## I

### THE CRUEL SISTERS-IN-LAW

IN the village of Benderi there lived a sardar. He had six sons and one daughter named Basumata. The sardar died after he had married his sons but he had not yet married his daughter. After the death of their father, the sons decided to go away to seek their fortune, but before they set out they asked their wives and their sister what they would like brought back as a present. Each of them asked for a sari of a certain colour, but their sister asked for an *amarlata sari*. The wives were very angry with Basumata as they considered she had asked for much the prettiest thing and they had not even thought of it themselves.

So they decided to annoy Basumata in every possible way. First they asked her to bring firewood from the forest, but they did not give her a rope with which to tie up the bundle. Basumata went to the forest and collected the bundle of firewood. Then she sat down weeping for she did not know how to take the bundle home without a rope. Suddenly a voice asked her why she was weeping and she answered, 'My sisters have told me to take home this bundle of firewood, but I have no rope with which to tie it.' Immediately a snake appeared and offered to tie up the bundle with its body. But it asked her to put the bundle down gently when she reached home so that it might wriggle away unseen. Basumata did what it asked and her sisters-in-law were amazed to find that she had brought home the bundle without a rope.

Then they asked her to bring water from the well in a pitcher with holes in it. She went to the well and sat there weeping, wondering how she could carry the water. Once again the voice asked her why she was weeping and she replied, 'I have been asked to carry water from the well in this pitcher which is full of holes.' The voice told her to dip her pitcher in the well and draw water. She did so and to her astonishment she found that little frogs had sat on all the holes and closed them up. She carried the water home to the amazement of her sisters-in-law. They could not think of any other ways to annoy her, so they plotted to kill her.

One day when they were husking paddy with the *dhenki*, they asked Basumata to stir up the paddy for them. While she was doing so one of the sisters pushed her under the *dhenki* and the others brought it down on her head. She died at once and they buried her in a field close to the house. Over her grave a chilli plant grew up and bore plenty of fine chillies. One of the sisters-in-law went to pick them and she heard someone singing,

‘Do not pluck, do not pluck the chillies, sister,

Basumata was killed for an *amarlata sari*.’

The sister-in-law was very frightened and hurried to tell the others what she had heard. One of them noticed that the chilli plant was growing in the very place that they had buried Basumata; so they uprooted the plant, and threw the pieces away about two miles from their house. Immediately a *kadam* tree grew up in that place.

Soon after the six brothers returned from their travels. On the way they rested under the *kadam* tree. One of them plucked some leaves of the tree and heard someone singing,

‘Do not pluck, do not pluck the kadam leaves,

Basumata was killed for an *amarlata sari*.’

The brothers were greatly surprised and bewildered by the song. They started cutting down the tree and again heard the song telling them not to cut it. They took no notice of it and felled the tree, but the song continued. Then they started sawing it up and they heard the song again telling them to use the saw gently. They split the trunk into two parts and Basumata came out from it and stood before her brothers. Great was their joy and they asked her what had happened and why she was there. She told them the whole story and the brothers took her home and killed their six wives. After that they lived happily for the rest of their lives with their sister Basumata.

## II

### THE TUS BIRD AND THE KASH GRASS

A tus bird had its nest in some kash grass by the riverside. One day a piece of grass stuck in its rump and hurt it, so it went to the king and complained about the grass. The king summoned the grass and said, ‘Grass, why did you prick the tus bird?’ The grass replied that nowadays no cows ever came to graze it and so it had grown very tall with sharp points and it could not help pricking the tus bird.

Then the king called the cow and said, ‘Cow, why do you not eat the kash grass by the riverside? Then the grass will not grow long and will not prick the tus bird.’ The cow answered that nowadays its cowherd never took it down to the river to graze and so it could not eat the kash grass.

Then the king called the cowherd and said ‘Cowherd, why do you not take your cows down to the river to eat the kash grass? Then the grass will not grow long and will not prick the tus bird.’



The cowherd replied that his master half-starved him and he had not the strength to take his cows all that way to eat kash grass by the riverside.

Then the king called the master and said, 'Master, why don't you give your cowherd enough to eat? Then he could take his cows to eat the kash grass by the riverside and the grass would not grow long and prick the tus bird.' The master answered that the potter did not give him enough pots to cook food for all his servants.

Then the king called the potter and said, 'Potter, why don't you make more pots? Then the master could cook more food and his cowherd would have the strength to take his cows down to the river to eat the kash grass. Then the grass would not grow long and prick the tus bird.' The potter replied that as fast as he made his pots the rats broke them.

Then the king called the rat and said, 'Rat, why do you break the potter's pots? If you left his pots alone he could make enough for the master and the master could cook enough food for his cowherd. Then the cowherd would have the strength to take his cows to the riverside to eat the kash grass. Then the grass would not grow long and prick the tus bird.' The rat said that the cats had stopped killing his people and now there were so many of them that they could not help breaking the pots.

So the king called the cat and said, 'Why do you not kill the rats? If you would kill them, the potter could make enough pots for the master. Then the master could cook enough food for his cowherd and the cowherd would have the strength to take his cows to graze the kash grass by the riverside. Then the grass would not grow long and prick the tus bird.' The cat said that the rats were such dirty creatures that his people could not eat them.

On hearing this, the king ordered the rats to bathe every day. The rats obeyed his order and at once the cats began to kill the rats, the rats ceased breaking the pots, the potter made more pots for the master, the master cooked more food for his cowherd, and the cowherd had the strength to take his cows to graze on the kash grass by the riverside. Then the grass did not grow long and did not prick the tus bird.

### III

#### THE BEARS AND THE HARE

In a jungle lived a bear, a she-bear and their two cubs. Every day the bear stayed at home with the cubs, while the she-bear went out to look for food.

One day when the she-bear was out, she came to the foot of a tall tree in which a boy was sitting eating the fruit. He had eased himself under the tree and when the bear saw the dirt she began to dance and sing. Suddenly she noticed the boy's shadow and looking up saw the boy in the tree. She asked him to come down, saying, 'I shall take you home with me.' The boy was very frightened at first and said, 'If I come down, you will eat me.' 'No, I shan't,' replied the bear. 'You can come home with me and play with my cubs.' The boy then climbed down from the tree and the she-bear took him to her den. The boy used to play with the cubs every day and the bears began to go out together to look for food. The she-bear used to say, 'If the cubs cry while I am away sing to them, "Your mother will bring twelve bundles of food and your father will bring thirteen." And if you say to them, "Sleep, little ones," they will lie down and go to sleep.'

One day when the parents were out looking for food, the cubs started to cry and the boy sang to them as the she-bear had suggested. A hare heard him singing and came up. He asked the boy, 'Who is making all this noise? I have come back tired after Khunta Puja and you stop me from getting any sleep. Give me any food you have in the house. If you don't I shall bite you.' The boy then showed the hare the food that was in the den. It ate it up and went away. It did this every day for a long time.

At last the she-bear asked the boy, 'Where is all the food that I bring home every day?' The boy replied, 'A rich man with long ears comes every day and frightens me saying, "I have vowed to sleep for twelve years. Why won't you let me sleep?" He then threatens me and takes away all the food.' The she-bear told her husband to stay in the den while she went out for food. Next day the hare came again and threatened both the bear and the boy. The bear was very frightened and excreted at the entrance to the cave. When the she-bear returned, she slipped and said to the bear, 'You are a great coward. To-morrow you shall go out to get food and I will stay at home.' Next day the hare came again and began threatening the boy and the she-bear. She took up a digger and began chasing the hare. The hare ran through the jungle and the she-bear went after it. As she was chasing it, they came to a place where two trees were growing close together. The hare slipped between the trees, but the she-bear got stuck. The hare then stopped, seized the digger and killed the she-bear with it.

It then proceeded on its way. A little farther on it met some people going home with some wild sweet potatoes which they had dug up in the forest. It exchanged the digger for the potatoes.

It then went on and saw some women drawing water from a well. It exchanged one of the women for the potatoes and went along with her until they reached the house of a Dom where a dog was husking paddy. The hare stopped and asked the Dom, 'Why do you get a dog to husk your paddy?' Here is a woman who can do that for you. Take her and give me your drum in exchange.' The Dom gave the hare the drum and it went away.

After several days, the hare went to a large village and began thumping on its drum and singing, 'I swapped sweet potatoes for a woman and the woman for this drum.' Then it sang, 'War is coming this way. Run away, run away.' The villagers were terrified and ran away immediately. Then the hare went into their houses and ate whatever it could find.

One day, however, the villagers made an image of a man out of some sticky gum and stood it up outside the door of a house. The hare came and again began thumping on its drum and singing. It went up to the image and said, 'Run away.' The image could not hear or move, so it stayed where it was. The hare got angry and struck at the image with its drum stick. The stick stuck on the image. It then struck at the image with the drum and this also got stuck. Then it hit the image with its paws and they stuck too. When the villagers found the hare hanging on to the image, they beat it until it was all swollen and then hung it on a tree. They ate their food and then threw their leaf plates at the hare, saying, 'You have frightened us with false alarms and stolen our food.' Then they left it hanging there.

Soon after a jackal came nosing round and began to lick the leaf plates. The hare called out to the jackal, 'Why do you roam round licking leaf plates? See how nice and fat I have grown. Change places with me and in four days you will be as fat as I am.' The jackal agreed and took the place of the hare. The villagers used to beat it every day and throw their dirty leaf-plates at it. The jackal cried out, 'I am not the person you want,' but the villagers replied, 'We don't care who you are' and went on beating the jackal until the rope broke and it fell down. It ran away until it came to a plum tree. It was dying of hunger, so it climbed up to eat the fruit. While it was eating the plums, the hare came along and asked for some too. The jackal said, 'Look up and I will drop some into your mouth. The hare looked up and the jackal dropped down a stalk which stuck in the hare's nostril. The hare began to sneeze and ran away. As it went along it saw a drum in a *bari*. It took the drum to a well and began to beat on it, singing, 'O jackals, come to this well.' A jackal heard the song and came, and the hare told it to call up all the other jackals.

It raised its head and called out and all the other jackals came running. The hare made them sit in a ring round the well, and said to them, 'I have just found this fine drum at the bottom of the well. But there are lots of other drums there, some of which are so well made that they sound even if a fly sits on them. Now, as soon as I beat my drum, all of you must jump down the well.' The jackals agreed and as soon as the hare sounded the drum, they all jumped into the well and were drowned. One she-jackal, however, had been watching all this from a distance and, as soon as she saw all the jackals jump down the well, she ran away. She is the mother of all the jackals we see to-day.

## IV

## THE BOY AND THE TIGER

A boy was ploughing his fields when a tiger came and laughed at him, saying that his bullocks were no good for they could not pull the plough over small roots and plants. The boy said to the tiger, 'Can you pull a plough over roots and plants?' 'O yes,' replied the tiger, so the boy yoked it with one of the bullocks. But the tiger could not pull any better and for every lash the boy gave to the bullock, he gave four lashes to the tiger. The tiger protested at this disproportionate beating but the boy pointed out that the tiger had jeered at the bullocks when it could not itself pull the plough any better.

While he was ploughing the boy was beginning to plan how he could get the tiger killed. He told the tiger that it was impossible to plough across so many roots and he must go to the village to get an axe. When he got to the village he told everyone how he had got a tiger yoked to his plough and he asked the villagers to come along and kill it. They foolishly set off with their drums, and the tiger, hearing the noise, broke away from the yoke and fled.

A few days later the tiger again saw the boy ploughing in the fields. He came up to the boy and said, 'You cheated me the other day. You told me you were going to the village to get an axe and then you brought a great crowd of hunters instead. Now I am going to kill you and eat you.' The boy answered, 'Oh, no, please don't eat me up now. I am much too sickly and thin just now. Wait until you have fattened me up. Go and kill me a fat cow. I shall eat the beef and grow fat and then you can eat me.' The tiger agreed and went off and killed a fat cow for the boy. Then the two of them ate the cow.

The next day the tiger came again and said, 'Now I shall kill you and eat you,' but the boy said, 'I am still not fat enough.'

Kill me a pig and I will eat that.' So the tiger went off and killed a pig and the two of them ate it and the boy grew fat.

A few days later the boy was ploughing again and the tiger came up and said, 'Now you are fat enough. I shall eat you.' The boy had besmeared his whole body with ashes. He replied, 'Yes, now I am fit for tigers' food, but you and I have now become friends and it is not right that you should eat me.' But the tiger would not listen. The boy then suggested that he should kill himself by falling off a tree and then the tiger could eat him after he was dead. The tiger agreed to this, so the boy led him off to a palm tree. He asked the tiger to sit under the tree with its mouth open looking upwards. The tiger did so and the boy climbed up the tree. With his knife he then cut off a bunch of palm fruits and threw them into the mouth of the tiger. They stuck in the tiger's throat and it ran off choking. As it ran it met a woman who was going to her mother's house after quarrelling with her husband. The tiger entreated the woman to pull the palm fruits out of its throat but she refused, saying, 'How do I know that you will not kill me once I have helped you?' The tiger assured her that it could not possibly hurt anyone who had helped it. So the woman pulled out the palm fruits and saved the tiger's life. The tiger went off and did not kill the woman. Since then tigers never kill a woman who has run away from her husband after quarrelling with him.

## V

## THE SEVEN BROTHERS AND THE TIGRESS

Once there lived a rich man who had seven sons. While he was alive his family lived in great luxury but after his death the sons became very poor. At last they were forced to live on jungle roots and fruits.

One day they went to the jungle, collected roots and cooked them. They divided them out into seven shares but when they came to eat them they found to their surprise that there were eight. This happened day after day. At last they called out, 'If there is anyone here in the house, let him come out and take his share.' To their amazement, a most beautiful woman suddenly appeared before them. It was a tigress in human form. All of them at once wanted to marry her, but at last they decided that the eldest should have her.

They lived happily together for some time but all the while the tigress was planning how she could take the brothers to her parents who would kill them. At last she thought out a plan. She told her husband that she would like him to go with her to

her parents' house as there was soon to be a festival there. She told him to take his bow and arrows with him. As they went through the woods, they saw a bird and the tigress told her husband to shoot it. The husband said, 'What shall I say as I shoot it?' The tigress said, 'Say, "If I shoot the bird, may I live, if I fail, may I die."' The husband shot at the bird and missed it and the tigress exulted. At last they reached the cave where her parents were living. She pushed her husband inside crying, 'Kill him but give me a leg to eat too.' Her parents killed him and, eating the leg as she went, she returned to the house of the brothers.

She then asked the second brother to come with her to her parents' house, saying that her husband was enjoying himself so much that he wanted his other brothers to come also. As they went through the forest the same things happened and the second brother was killed also. In this way six of the seven brothers were killed.

At last she invited the seventh brother to come with her, but he had become suspicious and thought that something must be wrong. He therefore took his sword with him and went on horseback. Going through the forest he succeeded in killing the bird, and the tigress then feared that she would not be able to kill this brother. When they reached the cave she pushed him inside but he fought the tigers and killed them both. Hearing the noise in the cave the tigress ran away, turned herself into a mortar and lay on the road by which she knew the youngest brother would return to his house.

On the way back the young man saw the mortar lying in the road and thinking that it might be useful to him for pounding his paddy tied it on to his horse's back. On the way the young man felt very thirsty and seeing a mango tree covered in juicy mangoes, he dismounted and climbed the tree to eat the fruit. The tigress resumed her true form, killed and ate the horse and climbed the tree to eat the man. Seeing the tigress, the young man cried out, 'If I am the honest son of honest parents, may a mango fruit split open and receive me.' A mango fruit split open and the man crept in. The tigress then began to eat the mango and the young man called out, 'May a king's parrot come and pick the mango and drop it into a tank.' A parrot came, took the mango in its beak and dropped it into the tank where a fish gobbled it. The tigress, when she saw the parrot fly off with the mango, changed herself into a beautiful woman and went and sat weeping outside the king's palace. The gate-keeper told the king about her and the king sent to ask why she wept. She said that her husband had run away and left her all alone. The king seeing how beautiful

she was, then married the woman himself but she asked to be allowed to live alone in a separate room for twelve years. The king granted this.

One day the tigress asked the king to catch all the fish in his tank. Many fish were caught but the fish that had gobbled up the mango escaped. In the meantime a woman came to the tank with her pitcher to get water and the fish slipped in. The old woman was very glad to see the fish and took it home and put it under a basket. When she was starting to cook her meal she thought of the fish and exclaimed, 'I shall have a lot of food to cook to-day!' The boy in the fish called out, 'Cook enough for *two* persons to-day' When the rice was cooked, the woman went to the basket to get the fish and to her astonishment saw a handsome young man sitting there. She was very glad to see him and they sat and ate their meal together.

In the king's palace the tigress now began to eat up the king's cattle. The king was furious and passed an order that the tiger should be hunted down and killed. But no tiger could be found. At the hunt every man was present except the young man who was living with the old woman. The king called him and said, 'Everyone came to the hunt, why did you not come?' The young man replied, 'I will hunt on condition you listen to what I have to say.' The king listened and the boy told him the secret. 'The woman whom you have married is not a human being, she is a tigress. It is she who is eating your cattle. She must be killed.' The king gave the order for her to be put to death. 'But,' he said, 'If the killing of the cattle continues after she is dead then I shall cut you into five pieces.' The boy agreed, the tigress was put to death and no more cattle were killed. Then the king gave the young man a big reward.

## VI

### THE STORY OF THE COCKSCOMB FLOWER

Once upon a time there lived in a village six brothers and their only sister. They were very poor and spent their whole day working in the fields. Their sister stayed at home and cooked their curry and rice and then brought it to them in the fields. One day while she was cutting up the vegetables for the curry, she cut her finger and her blood soaked the vegetables. That day when her brothers were eating their food, one of them asked, 'What did you put into the curry to-day that it should be so delicious?' The girl laughed and told them how when she was cutting up the vegetables, she had cut her finger and some of the blood had gone into the curry.

When she returned home, the brothers began to talk about this. One of them said, 'Our sister's blood is so delicious, let us kill her and eat her.' All except the youngest agreed and he was told to go and fetch her, and take her to the bean field. 'Then we shall shoot her with our arrows.' The girl was brought and five of the brothers shot at her but missed her. Then the youngest was told that it was his turn. But instead of shooting, he stood there weeping. The others got angry with him and said, 'If you won't shoot her, we shall kill you too.' Out of fear he shot an arrow but he aimed in the opposite direction. Nevertheless the arrow killed the sister. Then five of the brothers cut her up but the sixth did not help. He went off and caught some fish and a crab in the river. When his brothers called him to come and share the meal he joined them, but while they were eating their sister's flesh he ate the fish, and when they were crunching her bones, he ate the crab. Then he threw away his share of the girl's flesh. After four days he saw a beautiful cockscomb plant was growing in that place, after another two days he saw that it had a flower and a day later he saw that the flower became his sister.

## VII

## THE WILD CAT AND THE CHICKS

In a village there lived a sardar. He told all the villagers that he was going to sow seed in his *bari* on a certain day and needed labourers. A hen who had five chicks heard about this and told her family that she was going to work in the *bari*. She went along and the sardar gave all the labourers millet, barley, maize and beans to plant. The hen ate up all the maize seed but sowed the rest. After finishing her work, she drew her wages and went back home. She gave the grain, that she had been given as wages, to her chicks and told them to pound it up and cook it for themselves. She added, 'I have already eaten and feel sick.' The chicks cooked the grain and ate their meal.

In the night the hen's gizzard burst and she died. The chicks began to weep and one of them went to collect people for the funeral. On the way the chick met a wild cat and asked him, 'Where are you going, uncle?' The wild cat replied, 'I am going for a stroll.' The chick asked him to come and help with the funeral. They went back to where the hen lay dead and the wild cat told the chicks to wash and dress the dead hen. The chicks did so and then the wild cat carried the hen to the burial ground. The chicks, however, followed without him knowing. They saw him take the hen to the cemetery and eat her all up. Then they went back home.



Later on the wild cat came to them and said that he had buried the hen very carefully. He said, 'Where will you sleep to-night?' The chicks said, 'We shall sleep in the corner of the room.' At night the wild cat came to eat them. He searched the corners of the room but could not find them, and went back to his lair. The next day he came again and asked the chicks, 'Where will you sleep to-night?' They replied, 'We shall perch on the shelf.' That night the wild cat came and looked for them but could not find them. The next morning he came again and asked the chicks, 'Where will you sleep to-night?' They answered, 'We shall sleep on the roof.' The wild cat came at night and looked for them, but he could not find them. The next day he came and asked them, 'Where will you sleep to-night?' They replied, 'We shall sleep on the drum to-night.' The wild cat came again at night and looked for them, but he could not find them. The next day the wild cat came once more and said 'Where will you sleep to-night?' They said, 'We shall sleep in that clump of grass to-night.' The wild cat came in the night and looked for them in the clump of grass, but could not find them.

As he was going home the chicks jeered at him. This made him furious and he shouted back, threatening to kill every one of them. He started looking for them once more, but all he could find were their droppings. He collected these in a bag and set off home with it.

On the way he stripped a long piece of bark from a tree, dyed it red, and tied it round his head like a turban. He sat down by a stream and started to eat the droppings. After a little while some jungle animals came to drink at the stream, but before they had time to drink, the wild cat asked them to guess what he was eating. They all replied, 'You are eating *pan* and betel nut.' Then they drank and went away.

Last of all a squirrel came and the wild cat asked it the same question. The squirrel replied, 'You have not been able to catch a fowl so you are eating the droppings instead.' This made the wild cat so angry that he chased the squirrel. As he grabbed at it, he clawed its back. That is why squirrels have long marks down their backs. The squirrel hid in a hollow tree, and the wild cat tried to smoke it out. That is why squirrels to this very day are a smoky colour.

#### VIII

#### CUT TAIL AND PENTWA

There was once a widow who had an only son named Pentwa. Every day he went to plough in the fields and his mother took his food to him. One day he was ploughing very far from the village,

so the mother said to her son, 'On your way to the fields plough a furrow, then I shall be able to follow it and find where you are.' That day as she was on her way to the fields, the mother met a fox. 'Old woman, where are you going?' it asked. 'I am taking my son his food,' she replied. 'Give it to me,' said the fox. 'Put the rice down on the ground and you hold and pat my tail.' The old woman did as it said, the fox ate the greater part of the rice and left a little for the old woman's son. Then the mother went on her way.

This happened day after day and at last the son complained and said, 'Mother, why do you bring me so little rice nowadays?' Then the old woman told her son all about the fox. 'Very well,' said the young man. 'I know what I will do. To-morrow, I will put on your clothes and dress myself up as an old woman and you shall plough the field in my clothes.' The next day he did this. He put the rice in a basket, together with a sharp knife and set off. After going a little way he met the fox and as usual it asked for the rice. He put the rice in front of the fox and while it was eating he caught hold of its tail and cut it off. The young man laughed at it and called it Cut Tail. The fox ran off with its stump bleeding and shouted out, 'All right, Pentwa, I shall go and ease myself on your plough handle to-morrow.'

The next day Pentwa fixed his sharp knife to the plough handle and when the fox went to ease itself there it cut itself badly. It ran off crying, 'All right, Pentwa, I shall go and eat your pumpkins to-morrow.'

The next day Cut Tail collected together all his friends in the evening after dark and they set off for Pentwa's house. He was already sitting up on the top of his roof with a stick. Cut Tail sent his friends up to cut some pumpkins saying, 'Bring down the ripe ones first.' But the foxes could not find any ripe ones and Cut Tail got angry and said, 'I will go myself and get them.' He climbed up and got hold of Pentwa's stomach. 'See, here is one,' called out Cut Tail. Then Pentwa leapt up and beat him. As he ran off he cried out, 'All right, Pentwa, I shall come and steal your chickens.'

The next night Pentwa made a small hole in his hen house and then went inside himself. He heated up three or four sickles and made them red hot. When Cut Tail arrived with his friends, Pentwa called out, 'Put in your paws and I will hand you out a hen. The first fox put in a paw and when it heard the red-hot sickle spluttering *chur chur* it said, 'This is a big hen. I can't get it out.' Then Pentwa touched the fox with the sickle and it squealed out 'I can't get it out.' The other foxes tried until Cut Tail got angry and tried himself. Pentwa gave him a sharp cut with the sickle and then Cut Tail said, 'Yes, it is a very large hen.'

We must think out a plan of how to get it out.' While the foxes sat down to discuss the matter, Pentwa came out and beat them. As Cut Tail ran off he cried out, 'All right Pentwa, I shall have a feast after your death.'

Pentwa then told his mother, 'I am going to pretend that I am dead.' He wrapped himself up in a cloth and hiding a thorny stick beside him lay on his cot. The mother sat at the door weeping. Cut Tail came along and said, 'Old woman, why are you weeping?' 'Alas,' said the old woman, 'My son, Pentwa, has just died.' To-day is his death feast and so I am weeping.' 'May we come to the feast?' asked the fox. 'Certainly,' answered the old woman. So Cut Tail collected all his friends. They came along and the old woman tied them all up in a line with a rope. 'Why are you doing this?' asked Cut Tail. 'Then you won't be able to fight each other when I give you your food,' said the old woman. She went off and put an iron dish on the fire, heated it and then sprinkled drops of water on it. It sounded as if she were frying cakes. Then she sang,

'O boy, you were so good  
Now you have died, boy  
A feast is being given in your name  
And the foxes have come here.'

She sprinkled more water on the dish and sang again

'O Pentwa you were too good  
You are sleeping like a dead man  
Take up your semal stick  
And come I beg you.

She sprinkled more water on the dish and Pentwa rushed out with his stick and beat the foxes. They broke their ropes and ran away but Cut Tail who had been tied with a specially strong rope could not get away and Pentwa gave him an extra beating.

At last Cut Tail limped off swollen and bruised. He crept up to his friends and said, 'Why were you so impatient? If you had waited and not run off you would have had a fine meal of rice and meat. Look how fat I have got! Now let us do a funeral dance,' he added. The foxes formed a circle with Cut Tail in the middle and while they were dancing Pentwa again came up with his stick. All the foxes took to their heels but Cut Tail could not run and Pentwa beat him again until he died.

## IX

### THE COBRA'S RING

There was once a widow who lived with her son. They were so poor that the son said he would go and look for work in the house of some rich man. His mother agreed and he set out. First of all he came to the house of a cobra. 'May I work for you?' said the boy. 'If you wish,' answered the cobra, 'you can look

after my goats every day.' In this way eleven months passed. In the twelfth month his mother came to him and said, 'If the cobra asks you how much pay you want, keep quiet and do not answer. Also refuse to take any food from him. When he gets tired of asking you, say, "I will only take food from you on condition you give me whatever I ask."' The boy did this and at last the cobra said, 'All right. I will give you whatever you ask, but do eat some food.' The boy ate some food and then the cobra asked him what he wanted. The boy felt shy of asking, but the cobra said, 'Do not feel shy. I will give you whatever you wish.' Then the boy said, 'I want the ring that you wear on the end of your tail.' 'What,' said the cobra, 'were you shy of asking for such a little thing as that?' and he gave the boy the ring and let him return to his home.

The boy lived with his mother as before and every day he wore the cobra's ring. One day he went down to the river to bathe and somehow or other lost his ring in the water. When he got home he discovered that the ring was not on his finger and he went back to the river to find it. In the meantime a princess had also come down to the river to bathe and had found the ring and gone home with it on her finger. When the boy went back to the river and could not find it, he called up a scorpion and a cat and asked them to help him find out where the ring was.

In the course of their search the cat went to the palace and saw the ring on the finger of the princess. It went and told the scorpion and the two of them discussed how they could get hold of it. At last they thought out a plan. The scorpion hid under some leaves and when the princess bent down to pick them, the scorpion stung her ring finger. She shook her hand and the ring fell off. The cat seized it, put it on the end of its tail and ran away. The cat had to cross the river Ganges and while swimming across, the ring again fell into the water and a fish gobbled it up. When they reached the other side, the cat saw the ring was missing and the scorpion began to swear at the cat. They called to a kingfisher and asked it to take all the fish out of the river. The kingfisher started to throw the fish out one by one and the fish began to get very worried. They asked what the trouble was and they found that one of their number had swallowed a ring. They forced the fish who had swallowed it to vomit it out and return it to the cat. The cat again put the ring on the end of its tail and returned to the boy. It rubbed itself against his leg and on looking down he saw his ring. He was overjoyed to get it back and patted the cat and thanked it.

*Recorded from Sauria Paharias  
in the Godda Damin,  
Santal Parganas, 1944*

SILAS MALTO  
D. P. SINGH  
MILDRED ARCHER

# THE FOLK-TALE IN SANTAL SOCIETY

BY MILDRED ARCHER

## I

SINCE the first quarter of the 19th century, folklore has been studied scientifically. This study has passed through many phases, each of which has made its contribution. The philological aspect was laboriously emphasised by the brothers Grimm; the anthropological by Mannhardt, Andrew Lang, Frazer and Robertson Smith. The Folklore Society concentrated on a study of motifs and it is chiefly from this point of view that stories in India have been examined by scholars such as Flora Annie Steel and Sir Richard Temple. From America Maurice Bloomfield and his school have deepened and systematised this research into Indian motifs.

Although these different aspects of folk-tales have been emphasised, little or no attention has been paid to the function of the tales in the tribal society of India. Obviously tribal tales are intended for entertainment but they also satisfy certain needs and from this point of view I propose to analyse the folk-tales of Santals in this paper.

## II

Compared with tales of other tribes of Middle and Eastern India, Santal folk-tales have been widely and systematically collected. In 1875 the Rev. F. T. Cole printed two folk-tales from Rajmahal subdivision in *The Indian Antiquary* and in 1891 Dr A. Campbell, a missionary at Gobindpore, published a collection of tales from Manbhum. These collections were followed in 1909 by C. H. Bompas's great collection; *The Folk-lore of the Santal Parganas*, while between 1925 and 1929 P. O. Bodding published 93 stories with a Santali text and English translation. The stories were collected chiefly in the Mohulpahari and Benagaria areas of the Santal Parganas from eight narrators and for some years these remained the only vernacular collection. Unfortunately they were published in such a form that they have remained only a scholar's text and have therefore had no circulation amongst Santals. A section dealing with 'Stupid Santals' was however reprinted by the Northern Churches Mission—not to the very great amusement of Santals themselves. Finally in 1944 the Santal Education Committee, Dumka, published *Gam Kahani*, a collection of 138 stories in Santali made by S. C. Murmu.

These collections naturally overlap. Coles' story of Kanran and Guja is one of the most widespread Santal stories with the 'Two Brothers' motif, but his stories of 'Toria the Goatherd' and 'The Daughter of the Sun' do not occur elsewhere. About half of Campbell's stories occur in Bompas and Bodding, while 72

of the 185 stories in Bompas are reproduced in a fuller form by Bodding. Excluding *Gam Kahani*, therefore, more than 200 Santal folk-tales have now been recorded in English and it is these stories which I shall now analyse.

## III

From the circumstances in which Santal tales are told, it will be obvious that whatever other functions they serve, their primary use is to provide entertainment in a manner that is Santal. Stories are told at night when the day's work is finished and young and old collect round a village teller. Stories are recounted when men and boys are guarding the paddy crop on the threshing floors in winter or are watching mahua trees, while in the hot weather a party often collects round a verandah in the village street. Old women who are cooking food in the house amuse a crowd of children by telling them a tale. Cowherds tell each other stories when grazing their cattle and stories are also told when villagers are assembling for a village meeting or waiting for guests to arrive at a wedding. On all these occasions there is time to be whiled away and the folk-tale is at once a diversion and a recreation. The tale which most closely fulfils this need is the humorous story and there are five types of which the main object is amusement.

The first type involves a use of riddle talk or conversational symbolism. Some men go to look for a possible bride and are prejudiced against a girl because she says her father and mother are out, her father 'having gone to meet rain' and her mother 'to make two persons of one.' (Bodding 91). The men think the girl is utterly stupid but on returning home their women folk jeer at their obtuseness and say that the girl's meaning is quite clear. The father had gone to cut thatching grass and the mother had gone to grind split peas.

In another story (Bodding 27) a son-in-law is eating a delicious curry of bamboo shoots and asks his mother-in-law what it is made of. She replies, 'Look what is behind you. That is what I have made the curry of.' The young man turns round and sees the bamboo door. When everyone is asleep he steals the door, returns home and tells his wife about the delicious curry made from a door. He insists on his wife making one with bits of the door and is surprised to find that the curry is uneatable. Many stories are in this way dependent on concealed meanings.

A second type involves verbal and linguistic muddles. Santals use words with great precision and a favourite humorous theme is that of the simpleton who takes a phrase literally and acts accordingly. There is the common story of two brothers. The elder tells the younger to prepare food and cook 'three pints.'

When he returns from the work he finds his younger brother has boiled three pint measures (Bodding 25). The next day the younger brother goes out to plough and his elder brother tells him, 'Take an axe along with you and if the plough should stick in a root or something, then use the axe.' The younger brother ploughs and when the plough sticks he cuts the legs of the bullocks and lames them. The next day the elder brother goes to the field and tells his younger brother to heat some water and wash his sister-in-law who has fever. He boils up some water, pours it over her and kills her.

Santals also enjoy the situations that arise from linguistic misunderstandings between Santals and Dikkus (non-aboriginals). These are very common in everyday life for few Dikkus know Santali and few Santals know much Hindi or Bengali. There is a ludicrous story of a conversation between a Santal woman and a money lender who has come to realise his dues. She cannot understand a word he says and a futile conversation ensues in which the Hindi *sem* (bean) is confused with *sim* (hen), between the Hindi *kara* (a buffalo) and the Santali *karai* (to beat with a stick (Bodding 20).

In another story a Dikku and a deaf Santal misunderstand each other. The Dikku asks the Santal the way and the Santal is terrified because he thinks he is asking for his bullocks. The Santal returns home and tries to explain to his family what has occurred but they too are deaf and a series of comic conversations follow in which each misunderstands the other (Bodding 26). So great is Santal pleasure in repartee and a witty use of words that one story (Bodding 28) has no real plot but is only a flow of back-chat.

In a fourth type, callousness and understatement is a trick that never fails to make Santals laugh. There is the story of the mother who bears twins in the jungle when she is picking *karla* fruit (Bompas XCVI). As she cannot carry everything home she decides to leave the babies and carry home the *karla* fruit for the latter is more useful and more difficult to get. Another story is of the Mongoose boy (Bodding 80) who, when taking his mother's corpse to the Ganges, blackmails some traders into thinking that they have killed the mother and they give the boy their bullocks as hush money. The boy throws his mother's corpse on the road and returns home. All the other villagers envy his success and all kill their wives in the hopes that they can exchange their corpses for bullocks. The humour of these stories has a mock callousness akin to Belloc's 'Cautionary Tales' or 'Strewelpeter.'

Lastly, there are numerous stories, with a humour reminiscent of 'The Miller's Tale.' A typical story of this type is about a

jackal who sits on a white ants' nest and gets up to find that its haunches have been eaten off (Bodding 12). It goes off to a Chamar who covers the hole with leather. The jackal then finds that it cannot evacuate, so it trots off to the blacksmith who bores a hole in the leather. The jackal repays him by urinating and evacuating in his face.

Other stories focus on the intestines. In the popular story of Jhore and Bajun (Bodding 25), Bajun is chasing Jhore to kill him. Jhore however picks up a goat's stomach as he runs and then hides inside a hollow tree. Bajun pokes at him with a sharp stick and Jhore lets the entrails fall out of the tree. On seeing them Bajun concludes that he has killed his brother. There is another version of the same story where two brothers, Kanran and Guja, are hiding in a tree and Guja is clutching the entrails of the tiger which they have just killed. A king's son comes along and camps for the night under the tree. Guja hangs on to the entrails as long as he can but at last he is so stiff that he lets them fall on the young man, who wakes up and seeing himself covered in blood and guts, thinks he must have been wounded. He rushes off howling and Kanran and Guja come down from the tree and collect all his baggage.

These humorous stories are in no way a mirror of the tribe for they do not present Santal life as it is. Yet their style and humour make them essentially Santal. They emerge from a sense of buoyancy, a resilience in living. They entertain Santals because they make the world absurd and show the Santal as master of it.

#### IV

If amusement is a primary object, a second and more important function is the transmission of Santal knowledge. In certain tales, the facts of natural history or science are described and Santal explanations are offered. One story (Bompas XXIX) explains why the *murup* tree leans, while another (Bompas CXIV) shows why leopards and tigers eat raw flesh and cats bury their excrement. In Bodding 85 there is a long and beautiful story of how sabai grass first grew. Seven brothers killed their sister, for when she cut her finger and blood went into the curry it tasted so delicious that they decided to eat more of her. Six of the brothers ate her flesh but the seventh buried his share and from it there grew a beautiful bamboo. A man came along, cut it and made a fiddle from it. Suddenly a girl emerged from the fiddle. He made her part of his family and one day her brothers visited the house. She told them who she was and they were so ashamed of their crime that the eldest brother trampled on the ground and made a large hole. They all ran into it but before the last brother disappeared, the girl caught his hair and pulled it out. She spread it on the ground and it turned to *sabai*.



The importance of such stories does not lie in their facts but in the way they conserve a Santal attitude. It is not their 'science' that matters—for it is not science but poetry. It is the reduction of the world to Santal terms and the assertion of *Santal* explanations that heightens tribal morale and preserves its way of life.

## V

But besides transmitting knowledge, many tales conserve customs and traditions. 'The customs have come down from old times,' said Sibu Hansdak, the story-teller of Dhamna. 'We remember them by telling stories.' In certain tales, the custom is justified by an explanation. Two tales (Bodding 16 and 17) describe why women cannot take part in religious ceremonies—they are so foolish that they cannot do them properly. Once the men were away and there was no one to fell the bullock at the funeral sacrifice. The women tried to do it but all they could do was to cut off its tail.

In other tales, there are careful accounts of custom. The method of taking a ghar jawae or serving son-in-law, for example, is told in Bodding 22. In 'The Leopard and the Marriage Broker' (Bodding 84), there is a long discourse on marriage, its ceremonies and negotiations. The reason for these recitals is the need of preservation, for it is only by such repetition that custom is systematised.

## VI

More important even than custom is the tribal attitude to its institutions and the function of many Santal folk-tales is to be both moral and instructive.

'We tell stories,' Sibu once said, 'so that the children will not do like that and will be afraid.'

The futility of family quarrels and the folly of partitions is a common theme. In 'The Oilman and his five sons' (Bompas IX) the sons wish to set up separate households as their wives have quarrelled. The father takes a large log and asks them to break it up. They fail. Then he tells them to cut the log up into six pieces with their axes. They do so and he gives them each a piece of the wood. Then he tells them to break these pieces up into sticks with their hands and the sticks easily snap. 'We are like the whole log,' says the father. 'We have plenty of property and are strong and can overcome attack; but if we separate we shall be like the split sticks and easily broken.'

In another tale (Bodding 86) the need for good relations between relatives by marriage is emphasised. While their husbands are

away seven sisters bully their sister-in-law. At last the girl tries to hang herself but Chando turns her into a fruit. When the brothers return they see the fruit and pick it and inside they find their little sister. She tells them her troubles and they take her home hidden inside a sack. The wives, on being asked where the sister is, make various excuses. Then the men punish their wives by keeping them down a well for several days.

Other stories emphasise the domestic difficulties within a joint family. There are the quarrels between the women when there are several living in one house. Difficult mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law who harass the little unmarried sister of the house are favourite themes.

Other stories emphasise the difficulty of having more than one wife. Polygamy is allowed but Santal opinion is against it and Santals consider that only a fool has several wives. The stories nearly always take the side of the first wife and show up the cruelty of step-mothers and the sad position of a first wife.

In a similar way, stories about polygamous households decry more than one wife and ridicule a husband who takes co-wives.

## VII

Equally important is the way in which the tales build up a set of tribal standards and values and define the ideal Santal man and woman.

A girl should be buxom and jolly, ready to dance and sing. In one story (Bodding 37), a jolly girl loves dancing but she is ashamed of her husband who has a growth on his forehead. By a trick he manages to make her tolerate it and she makes a delightful, cheerful wife.

A wife should be intelligent, prudent and resourceful in her domestic work. In one story (Bompas VIII) a capable wife saves the whole family from ruin. A father and his seven sons had fallen into poverty. The father chose his eldest daughter-in-law to be the head of the family and all promised to obey her. She told the family to bring in whatever they could find in the fields, no matter what it was. The old man came back with some human excrement wrapped up in a leaf, and his daughter-in-law hung it up in the house. Then he brought in the slough of a snake which she fastened to the roof with a clod of earth. Many years later the Raja of the country was ill and the ojhas said that only human excrement twelve years old could cure him. A reward of two hundred rupees was offered for it and the daughter-in-law was able to procure the medicine. Another day the son of a Raja was bathing and left his gold belt by the tank. A kite

seized it and flew off. But when it saw the snake skin lying on the roof it dropped the belt and flew off with the skin. A reward of a thousand rupees was offered for the belt. In this way a prudent housewife made her family rich (Bompas VIII).

A wife should be intelligent. There is the story (Bodding 93) in which the woman's wisdom saves the husband's life. But for his wife's intelligence the prince would have been killed by an ungrateful snake.

A wife should be faithful and in spite of all sorts of trials and troubles should never leave her husband. There is the story of the girl (Bodding 87) who found that her bridegroom was a donkey. She did not leave him, however, but tended him and stayed with him until at last Chando restored him to his former human shape.

A wife should work hard, know her domestic work, manage the household purse and not spoil her children. There is the story of the carpenter's wife who spoils her boy so badly that he will do no work and eventually runs away from home (Bodding 22).-

The slut, the lazy and the stingy woman are all condemned in the stories. There is the stingy girl who would not cook a meal for her father when he came to visit her even though there was a pea-fowl, ready for cooking in the house. But her father revenges himself by telling her that a pea-fowl is excellent if cooked with mahua oil-cake. She does this and it is too bitter to eat (Bodding 30).

Then there is the lazy girl who pretended she was ill, and could do no work. She was soon cured by the medicine men as they hung enormous tubers round her neck and made her walk up and down the village street. The villagers laughed and jeered at her so much that she was never lazy again (Bodding 32).

Above all a wife should not gossip or make mischief. These vices more than any other make for trouble in the joint family and the village. In one story (Bodding 18) a husband tested his wife to see if she could keep a secret and not spread it abroad. He put a dirty loin cloth that was spattered with cow-dung in a pot and hung it up on the roof. His wife asked him what it was but he refused to answer her. She pestered him until at last he told her that it was a great secret. He had killed a man and in order to hide the matter from the police he had put the man's head in the pot. She must on no account tell anyone. All was well until the husband and wife had a quarrel and then the woman ran off and told the headman. Her husband was arrested but he explained how he had been testing his wife and he was eventually allowed to go.

Another husband, a Mahra or Goala, finds four brass pots of money but before he trusts his wife with the secret, he tests her. He tells her that he is going away to see the king who has a tortoise in his rectum. His wife at once tells the whole village and before long the king hears the story. He sends for the Mahra and asks him what he means by spreading such an absurd story. The Mahra explains that he was testing his wife as he had found four brass pots of money and was wondering if she would keep the secret. The king released him on condition that he shared the money (Bodding 19).

But no matter how capable a woman is she should be guided by her husband and ready to accept his advice. 'The way the needle goes, that way the thread follows' and 'We men are the woman's bridle' are Santal proverbs explaining the ideal relationship of husband and wife.

The tribe's view of the good husband is equally clear. The weakness of most men is drunkenness, laziness and flirtatiousness (Bodding 38). A favourite theme is a man's helplessness in domestic matters and his lack of appreciation of the woman's work. There is the story (Bodding 59) of a quarrel between a husband and wife. The husband says he does far more work than his wife, so she tells him to keep an account of his day's work. They find that he has only done six different jobs during the time that she has done fifteen. The wife offers to change work with him but he admits his fault and becomes 'like a dog.' 'You see; in such manner we men are the women's dogs. When they tell us to wash our hands, then only we get food.'

#### VIII

Finally, many stories help to give the Santal a feeling of self-confidence in his relations with the outside world. It is not without significance that in the majority of the stories the weak triumph over the strong. The youngest son or daughter prospers. The poor little sister of the household with the help of the frogs and the snakes manages to accomplish the impossible tasks set her by her sister-in-law (Bompas X). The simple outwits the clever. The poor prosper and the wealthy lose their riches.

It is the same with the stories of animals. The Santal outwits the leopard, the tiger and the bear, animals of which he has a healthy fear. Amongst the animals themselves, the smaller outwits the fiercer. The goat defeats the bear, and the jackal the tiger. The jackal has a dual personality for sometimes he is the villain of the piece and suffers, but often he is the weak intelligent little animal who outwits the strong. There can be little doubt

that these animals are often symbolic. The bear is the blundering unintelligent fool, the tiger the blustering tough, and if the jackal is sometimes the shrewd Dikku coming in his silk cocoon shoes, he is more often the Santal triumphing over the strong.<sup>1</sup>

In a similar way the outside world itself is stylised in the stories so as to give the Santal self-confidence and make him feel superior to others and capable of holding his own. In actual fact, the world, as the Santal sees it, is very different. He usually has a great fear of the Dikku who extracts land, money and possessions from him. The Dikku is described in contemptuous terms; Doms are mere 'crooked drumsticks,' Jolhas are fools who even believe that a pony is born from an egg (Bodding 55), Mahras are rogues and constables are 'red headed lizards.'

In the story of the Santal woman and the money lender (Bodding 20) it is the woman who wins.

The civil administration is similarly portrayed in scornful terms. It is portrayed as remote from village life and ignorant of Santal custom. Courts are full of corruption and misunderstanding. Only a fool makes use of them. Sometimes a magistrate is appreciated. 'He went to a Muhammadan magistrate and it chanced that he was an honest man who gave just judgments and took no bribes, and made no distinction between rich and poor; he always listened to both sides carefully, not like some rascally magistrates who always believe the story that is first told them and pay no attention to what the other side say.' (Bompas XXI.) In the story of 'Persons who bear witness after having taken bribes' a Santal defeats a money lender but it is the court that is ridiculous.

## IX

The needs which Santal folk-tales serve are therefore important and far-reaching. They make the tribe laugh in spite of poverty, illness and daily worries. They preserve tribal knowledge and they give sanction to tribal custom. They emphasise standards and assert values and above all they create solidarity and inspire self-confidence. The folk-tales are a power house by which the tribe maintains its way of life.

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare a note by Joel Chandler Harris on Negro folk-tales. 'The story of the Rabbit and the Fox seems to me to be to a certain extent allegorical, albeit such an interpretation may be unreasonable. At least it is a fable thoroughly characteristic of the negro, and it needs no scientific investigation to show why he selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf and the fox. It is not virtue that triumphs but helplessness; it is not malice, but mischievousness.'

# THE LEGEND OF RASALU KUAR

BY VERRIER ELWIN

## I

THIS beautiful legend, which has always seemed to call out their poetic best in its narrators has been translated several times into English, in every case from a different original. The first recorder of the tale was General Abbot, well known on the Indian Frontier, who in 1854 translated it, in the fashion of the time, in rhymed heroic couplets, dividing his work into several 'fyttes.' This was published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Thirty years later two scholars in the Punjab were at work apparently independently since neither mentions the other, on the legend. The Rev. Charles Swynnerton, a Senior Chaplain to the Indian Government, a man of considerable if rather pompous literary gifts, got his work out first. In 1883 he published in the *Folklore Journal*<sup>1</sup> a version of the legend that he had taken down in Ghazi on the Upper Indus. In 1884 he supplemented this by his *Adventures of the Panjab Hero, Raja Rasalu*, 'consisting of eleven distinct tales, most of them of great beauty, which were derived partly from the Ghazi version, but chiefly from the versions of two professional bards, Sharaf and Juma, both famous among the villagers of the Rawalpindi Districts.' Nearly twenty years later, Swynnerton produced from his retirement in England yet another version of the legend which he had taken down from 'Sher, a bard living near Abbottabad in the Hazara District' in his *Romantic Tales from the Panjab*, published in Westminster in 1903.<sup>2</sup> It is a remarkable and, I think, a rather charming thing that this clergyman of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment should have devoted a quarter of a century to the study of this legend which, however beautiful, is largely an account of crime and passion. But to Swynnerton these treasures of his research were almost part of his own classical and Christian past. 'Here and there,' he writes, 'in these old-world fragments we catch glimpses faint yet tender of the Golden Age dreamt of by the bards of yore. What could be more quaint and simple in its golden loveliness than the peaceful picture presented to us in the story of Raja Rasalu and Raja Bhoj? It is as if the man of blood had passed out of a world of battle and strife into a region of new and happy existence, as if he had stepped backward in the march of Time and was tasting the delights of that blissful era, in depicting which the wild dreamy eloquence of the Knight of La Mancha enchanted the ears of his rustic audience, for even to him it was

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 129 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A new edition was issued in 1908, and included both the *Romantic Tales* and the *Indian Nights' Entertainment*, which had first been issued in 1892. The new volume omitted all illustrations and unfortunately has no index.

not given to perceive until the very last that, after all, the Golden Age lies not in the visionary past, but in the bright unfoldings of an assured future, in the crowning elevation of the whole race, in "the Christ that is to be." And though few to-day would either write in this way or agree with what is written, one's heart warms to a man who can find beauty in rustic song and love it so well.

Meanwhile, however, a person of a very different type and of far greater gifts of both scholarship and poetry had produced yet another version of the Rasalu legend. The Rev. Charles Swynnerton does not seem to have approved of Sir Richard (then only Lieutenant) Temple. He refers to his *Legends of the Panjab*<sup>1</sup> in a curious sentence: 'another and a very different version of Rasalu's adventures was, I understand, published by subscription in Bombay.'<sup>2</sup> Temple's first volume, which contained the bulk of his version, was published in 1884, and his second volume with two additional songs appeared the following year. But Swynnerton will not take his rival's name, and Temple retaliates by ignoring Swynnerton entirely; in the Preface to his second volume in which he discourses at length on the study of folk-legend in India, one might have expected at least some reference to the book which had treated largely of the same material only the previous year, but he is silent.

Temple's 'The Adventures of Raja Rasalu' is partly in prose, partly in verse. The translation is almost perfect and is so modern in style and method that it hardly dates at all. The original was actually taken down by J. G. Delmerick of the Punjab Commission in 1869.

I myself was born while Swynnerton was reading the proofs of his *Romantic Tales*, and no doubt struggling with his publishers (Constable) about the illustrations, in 1902. Now over 40 years later I have obtained yet another version of the legend, from an Ahir of the village of Amaldihah in the Bilaspur District. The new record differs in many important respects from the older versions, and this is natural when we remember that they were sung by Mussalmans of the north, and this by a Hindu semi-aboriginal of the centre of India. I will compare the different versions in detail immediately.

How far is Raja Rasalu a historic figure? The legend, says Temple, 'is of unusual value both for its historical and its folklore bearings.' Rasalu is the son of Salivahan of Sialkot and the story 'gives a hint of the true history of that Indo-Scythian hero, whose courts are still found in such abundance all over the Panjab, and

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Swynnerton, *Romantic Tales from the Panjab* (Westminster, 1903).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxx.

who must have flourished between the first Arab invasions of Sindh and Kabul and the rise of the Ghaznavide Dynasty.<sup>1</sup>

Swynnerton decides that Rasalu, was 'a Rajput of Sialkot, and Sialkot, as the name implies, was the stronghold of the Syals, a great tribe, still flourishing, who popularly claim descent from Raja Rasalu himself.'<sup>2</sup> He suggests A.D. 700 as the earliest approximate date for his rule, 'the very period when the Mohammedan invaders were over-running Central Asia.' The name Rasalu is possibly 'not so much a personal name, not a birth-name so much as a descriptive cognomen and signifies "Prince of the Syals."<sup>3</sup> So too the name of Rasalu's great enemy, Raja Hodi, is also dynastic. 'In the Peshawar Valley this prince is known as Hodi, a word which round Jalalabad assumes the form of Ude. And Ude is the province of Ude-nagra, answering to the region watered by the Kabul river.'<sup>4</sup> But Swynnerton agrees that everything is vague and uncertain; even of conjectural 'history' the legend can only suggest three things:

1. That there was a prince famous in story named Rasalu, a son of Raja Salivahan and a descendant of Vikramajit.
2. That he sprang from Sialkot in the Punjab, and that his sway extended from Ujjain to Kabul.
3. That he became a convert to Muhammedanism and finally suffered defeat at the hands of a prince apparently inferior to himself, living west of the Indus.<sup>5</sup>

The Ahir story in the text, like Temple's record, knows nothing of this third point and the narrator would refute with equal indignation any suggestion either of Rasalu's defeat or of his conversion. Here is the first and most important difference between the Bilaspur story and Swynnerton's version, which is written emphatically from the Mussalman point of view. While the Bilaspur Rasalu expresses his annoyance with his father and wife by going off to look for girls, Swynnerton's hero (like so many others) works off his Oedipus Complex in a change of religion. He goes to Mecca where three prophets embrace him 'and their embraces so purify his heart that the locks of infidelity are broken asunder.'<sup>6</sup> He plans to lead a Mussalman army against Sialkot. He describes his father, Raja Sulwahan, as offering a Mussalman boy as a human sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> Finally his queen is seduced by a Hindu.

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Panjab* (Bombay and London, 1884). Vol. I, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Swynnerton, op. cit., p. xli.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. xlii.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. xlii.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. xli.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150.



But in the Bilaspur tale Rasalu is throughout a Hindu and his queen is seduced by a Mussalman.

In other respects, the story in the text departs widely from the older versions. The resemblances are strongest at the beginning and end. All three versions open with a barren Rani who miraculously conceives (in Bilaspur through a mango, in the Punjab through a grain of rice). Rasalu is born and is at once segregated (in Swynnerton, to 'a solitary place'; in Temple, to a cellar; in Bilaspur, to a pit) When he grows up he annoys his father's subjects by breaking their water-pots and is banished. But he returns and is married. To revenge himself for an imaginary insult he cuts the marriage short and rides away.<sup>1</sup>

So far each version travels the same main road. But now Swynnerton's hero goes out as a warrior prince: he fights and defeats his father; he goes to see Mirshikari the great hunter, makes friends with Raja Bhoj, attacks the giants of Gandgarh. Temple's Rasalu too is a real folklore hero and moves in a world of giants, princesses, and supernatural beings. But the Bilaspur Rasalu is almost entirely concerned with matrimony, though remarkably indifferent to sex: he marries altogether seven wives and all his magical adventures are connected with winning them.

The versions converge again in the Raja Sirkatki (Sirkap, Sirikap) incident. In Temple's version, Rasalu meets the corpse of one of Sirkap's victims: it gives him bones to serve as enchanted dice. Rasalu plays with Sirkap at *Chaupur* with the head of the loser as stake. Rasalu wins but accepts Sirkap's little daughter Kokilan in place of his head. He takes her to an underground palace in the Murti Hills and plants a young mango tree: when the tree bears fruit Kokilan will be fit to be a wife. When she is grown, Kokilan goes hunting with Rasalu and catches the deer Hira: Rasalu is jealous of it and cuts off its ears and tail, thus causing it to be cast out of the herd. In revenge Hira spoils the garden of Rasalu's rival, Raja Hodi, and leads him to the palace where Kokilan is alone. The seduction scene is very similar to that in the text: the maina protests and is killed, the parrot escapes to warn Rasalu. Rasalu kills his rival and takes some of the flesh home. He tricks Kokilan into eating it and when she remarks, 'How very good the meat is today,' he replies:

'Living thou didst enjoy him, Rani,  
Dead thou hast eaten his flesh,  
Why shouldst thou not relish his flesh  
Who did enjoy thee?'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Temple omits this incident.

<sup>2</sup> Temple, Vol. I, p. 64.

The girl leaps down from the palace wall and is sorely wounded. Rasalu ties her with the corpse of her lover to Raja Hodi's horse and sends her away to Atak, Hodi's own country. There a Jhinwar water-carrier marries her and she has three sons. Rasalu returns to Sialkot.

Swynnerton's account materially agrees with this. On the way to Sirikot, the Fort of Skulls, Rasalu meets a corpse which laughs at him but gives him good advice and a cat to help him. Sirikap first tests him with riddles and then persuades him to play *chamapat*. He wins everything but just in time Rasalu remembers his cat and recovers his losses and then utterly defeats the Raja. He spares him however on condition that he reforms his character, draws five lines with his nose on a hot griddle and gives him his baby daughter in marriage. Rasalu goes off with little Kokla and finds a beautiful castle at Kherimurti near Burhan, and they live here for twelve years. Rasalu is constantly away hunting, and the girl is lonely but finds some comfort in her parrots, mainas and peacocks. Presently Rasalu insults a blue buck which revenges itself by leading Raja Hodi to the castle. Kokla gives him water and lets him into her room. She kills the maina. 'When night falls, they both sleep on the one cot, and the Rani talks to the Raja and the Raja to the Rani, and all the sentinel birds, seeing this, begin to weep.' The parrot flies off to warn Rasalu and Hodi runs away. Rasalu returns and kills his enemy. There are some moving and pathetic pages describing Rasalu's meeting with Kokla, the little wife tormented with fear, the husband noting on every side the tokens of her betrayal—the smoked hookah, the water raised from the well, the maina's cage empty, the girl's broken necklace. Rasalu gives the girl some of her lover's flesh to cook and eat: when she discovers what it is, the shock is too much for her and she leaps over the battlements and crashes to death beside her lover's body.

There then—according to Swynnerton—occurs an extraordinary incident. Rasalu hastens down and 'stooping over the dead body of the only woman whom he had ever really, truly, loved, the king is said to have then felt what it was to have loved and for ever to have lost.' He takes the body of his wife and her lover, lays them side by side and covers them with the same cloth. In the evening he carries them to the Indus and throws them together into the stream.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a note, however, Swynnerton relates an ending similar to Temple's. The Rani still breathes and Rasalu throws her into one sack and her lover's corpse into another, slings them over Hodi's own horse and sends it home saying, 'Go, tell Raja Bhatti that his son is coming to him married.' But on the way a sweeper stops the horse and rescues Kokla. He marries her and she bears him four sons (p. 465).

After this Rasalu grows careless and morose and when the brothers of Raja Hodi come to avenge him, he is defeated.

The Bilaspur story, although it departs frequently even in main outline from the older stories, is full of echoes of them. The miraculous conception, the concealment in a pit, the young girl's insult to her future husband, the breaking of the water-pots, the banishment, the tests, the friendly animals, the laughing corpses, the gambling-scene—these are the common clichés of all Indian folk-tales: the only remarkable thing about them here is that so many of them are associated together and in the same order in each version.

More interesting is the combination of 'poetry' and 'prose' in each account. The main narrative is in a rhythmic prose: much of the dialogue is in song. Many of Temple's songs are rhymed couplets which would pass in Chhattisgarh as Dadaria.

Sometimes the older songs appear, a little altered and in a different context. Thus in Temple's account,<sup>1</sup> there is a pretty scene where Rani Saunkhni disguised as a slave girl talks to Rasalu as he is washing his clothes by a well. She complains that he has taken no notice of her and he replies,

The land is strange, the country is a stranger's  
And thou art a stranger's child  
Who will save his life  
That falls in love with a stranger?

And the Rani says

I will split sandal-wood  
And sit on the pyre and set it on fire  
If thou art in love with the stranger  
Then, my Lord, I will fall on thy neck.

In the Bilaspur legend, recorded seventy-five years later, Rasalu meets a princess by a well. He kills her attendants and is in great danger. He hears the war drums and sings,

Here is your mother's house  
But for me it is a foreign land  
For you I will lose my life  
And who will send the news back to my home?

And the girl replies,

I will make a pyre of sandalwood  
By my brother Biram I swear  
If you lose your life for my sake  
I will leap into the flames.

<sup>1</sup> Temple, Vol. I, p. 21.

The scene is similar, though the atmosphere is different: the new songs clearly echo the old.

Other echoes will be found in the wonderful passage describing Rasalu's return to Kokilan.<sup>1</sup>

'Raja Rasalu dismounted and went up to Rani Kokilan. And seeing that the brim of the well was broken in, and that there were human footprints about, he said to Rani Kokilan,

Who threw down the well brim, Rani?  
 Who broke the platform?  
 Who has taken out the water in pitchers?  
 Who has thrown down the stones?  
 Who has broken into my palace?  
 Footmarks are in the palace halls!  
 Who has lain on my bed?  
 The *niwar* is loose.<sup>2</sup>

The Rani answered,

I broke down the well!  
 I destroyed the platform!  
 I took out the water in pitchers!  
 I threw down the stones!  
 The maina loosened my hair  
 And the parrot broke my necklace  
 Releasing myself, Raja, I ran away  
 My footmarks are in the palace  
 My enemy lay on the bed and loosened the *niwar*.

The songs on page 257 are obviously an echo of this.

Among the details forgotten by the Bilaspur narrator is the extensive use of riddles in the older stories. Raja Sirikap first tries to defeat Rasalu by asking him riddles<sup>3</sup>; when Raja Hodi approaches Rani Kokilan she insists on his answering a number of riddles before she will admit him to her couch<sup>4</sup>; there are also a number of riddles about Raja Rasalu himself.<sup>5</sup>

In the Bilaspur version of the legend there are a number of remarkable passages where the sexual act is indicated by a number of symbols and unless the reader has the key to the method he can have no idea what is intended. Here we find natural objects not only symbolizing the act of sex but providing a sympathetic

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Cotton tape stretched across the bedstead.

<sup>3</sup> Swynnerton, pp. 253 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Temple, Vol. I, p. 42; Vol. III, p. 238; there is similar riddling talk between Raja Dhol and his bride's companions, Vol. II, p. 335.

<sup>5</sup> *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XII, p. 307.

setting for it. With these passages may be compared the beautiful account of people sleeping in the Bengal ballad, 'The Blind Lover.'

It was the dead hour of night. Reclining on its bed of leaf the flower-bud lay silently asleep, and on the bosom of the flower the bee slept sweetly. On the breast of the king lay the queen like a loose garland of flowers unconscious in sleep.<sup>1</sup>

A very common erotic image is that of cloud and storm—the cloud that covers, the rain that falls, the storm that tosses to and fro—they occur again and again in these and other songs. The Chaumasa Seasonal Songs recorded by W. G. Archer in Patna District are full of these symbols.

June is the month of parting, friend  
The sky glowers with gloom  
Leaping and reeling the god rains  
And my sweet budding breasts are wet.  
All my friends sleep with their husbands  
But my own husband is a cloud in another land.

One of Devendra Satyarth's Dogra Songs has a similar theme :

The Raj of the Dogra king is hard  
O when should I come to you, my love ?  
Small rain-drops are falling  
The sky is heavy with the clouds  
Your shirt is made of the flowered cloth  
And inside it move two round lemons.  
The Raj of the Dogra king is hard  
O when should I come to you, my love ?

Sometimes the cloud and storm are not directly expressive of the intercourse of lovers but provide a suitable setting. Temple records a vivid poem describing a love-affair between Raja Rasalu and the Gardener's wife. There is no word about the actual encounter of the lovers, but everything is achieved by symbols. 'At midnight the rain fell.' The jealous Rani prays that the hut of the Gardener's wife may leak. The Raja returns home wet through and the Rani gives him a cold bath.<sup>2</sup>

But Temple's comment on this shows, what indeed is evident throughout his otherwise admirable work, that he did not grasp the principle of symbolism in Indian folk-poetry. 'It will be observed,' he says, 'that there is an allusion to a certain wet night, and all through the long legend of Raja Rasalu there are like mysterious allusions brought into the story in the most inappropriate manner.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. C. Sen, *Eastern Bengal Ballads* (Calcutta, 1923-32), Vol. IV, pp. 229 f.

<sup>2</sup> Temple, Vol. III, pp. 225 f.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 218.

In the Bengali ballad, 'The Love of the Washer-Maiden,' when the girl Kanchanmala ventures out of her house to meet the Prince, all the descriptive symbols are of storm and rain. Her lover's flute 'drives her like a storm.' As she waits for her parents to sleep 'the black clouds roar in the sky,' the showers fall all round. She reflects, 'I imagine your fair figure to be wet with rain. I am not near you in this depth of night. With what care would I not wipe away water from your body, brushing the drops with my flowing hair.'

The Rasalu story is one of the most beautiful of Indian folk-legends. I hope that this new record will send readers back to Temple and Swynnerton whose admirable work has suffered undeserved obscurity in recent years. Temple particularly deserves to be re-edited and newly produced by an enterprising publisher: his *Legends of the Panjab* is now almost inaccessible, even the British Museum does not possess a complete set. There is, however, a set in three volumes in the Imperial Library, Calcutta. ✓

## II

## THE TEXT

A RAJA ruled in the Punjab. He grew old but he had no child. When Mahadeo heard of his sorrow he came in the form of a Brahmin to visit him. The Raja received the Brahmin with great honour and told him his trouble. The Brahmin gave the Raja a bel stick and said, 'Go to your mango garden and throw the stick up into any tree that is bearing mangoes. But throw it only once. Be not proud or greedy; take as many mangoes as may fall and do not try for more.'

The Raja took the stick and went to the garden. He found a tree heavy with splendid fruit and threw the stick up into the branches. A single mango fell to the ground. The Raja was disappointed, for he had hoped for a large family, and he picked up the stick and threw it again. This time the stick remained in the tree and the one mango that had fallen disappeared.

Ashamed, the Raja went back to the palace and told the Brahmin what he had done. The Brahmin gave him another stick and sent him back to the same place. This time when the mango fell the Raja picked it up and took it back with him. The Brahmin said, 'Drink a little of the juice yourself and give the rest to your Rani.' The Raja did so and threw the skin and the stone into the stable. There one of the mares ate it. The Brahmin went home.

Soon the Rani found herself pregnant. The mare was also pregnant. The wife of the Diwan also conceived on the same day. When the time came, the Rani gave birth to a son, the mare to a foal, and the Diwan's wife to a daughter. On the day of the Chhatti ceremonies the Brahmin came again and the Raja received him with great honour. 'A son has been born to me through your blessing ; now accept any gift you will.'

The Brahmin said, 'I want no gift, nor will I give the boy his name today. In six years I will return and name him. Meanwhile make a great pit and shut the boy and girl up in it.' The Raja, anxious and afraid, did as he was bidden. He made a great pit and put the boy and girl into it. He put beds and blankets, food and water for many years, then covered the mouth with bamboos and wood, piled earth upon it and made the top level with the ground. When he had seen this done, the Brahmin went away.

The Raja and his Diwan were very sad for a time, saying, 'Surely our children are dead,' but after two years they forgot about them. After six years the Brahmin came again and the Raja received him with great honour. The Brahmin said, 'Let us open the pit and see if the children are alive or dead.' They removed the earth and there were the boy and girl laughing and playing together. The boy said, 'I am going to marry you.' 'Are you?' said the girl. 'I'll keep you as syce in my father's stables.' At that the boy was very angry and exclaimed, 'I will certainly marry you, but I will only do half the marriage ceremony so that you will neither enjoy me nor be able to marry anyone else.'

The Brahmin took the two children out of the pit and sent them home. He gave the boy the name of Rasalu Kuar, but to the girl he said, 'I will name you when the seven circlings of the pole at your marriage are complete.' The Brahmin went away.

The boy grew from day to day. He got a bow and used to hide by the well and break the pots of the village girls as they went for water. When they got brass pots he got a stronger bow and broke those also. The people complained to the Raja and he often rebuked his son, but the boy took no notice. At last in a rage the Raja wrote upon all four doors of his house—'If you are such a strong boy, go and bring the daughter of Sirkatki Raja in marriage.'

When Rasalu Kuar saw this he went in to collect his things and the chaprassis shut all the four doors. When the boy had put together his gold and silver, his pearls and diamonds, he found no means of getting out, and he sang :

O guards of the windows  
Watchers by the doors  
Quickly open the door  
Or I will strike myself  
With my sword and die.

Then the Kotwar opened the door and Rasalu Kuar came out with his things. He went to the stables and said to each horse in turn, 'I am going to marry Sirkatki Raja's daughter. Will you come with me or no?' Each horse replied, 'A thousand Rajas have gone there and have been killed and their horses with them. I cannot go with you.' At last the boy came to the mare which had become pregnant after eating the mango stone and the foal said, 'I am ready to go.' The mother was anxious and tried to stop it: 'A great full-grown horse cannot go, then how can this child?' But the foal got ready and Rasalu Kuar sang,

From the *ras* was born Rasalu  
From the seed the horse Shahkaran  
O horse we are going to a strange country  
Who can tell whether we will die or live?  
Help me in this great journey  
Your form is very lovely. I am Rasalu Kuar.

So the two set out. The Raja heard of it and sent for his Diwan. The Diwan followed Rasalu Kuar and persuaded him to return. They went together to the Diwan's house. But the prince was very angry and said in his mind, 'I will not drink the water of this Raja's kingdom.'

As Rasalu sat in the Diwan's house he saw the girl and remembered that it was she who had been his companion in the pit. He called the Diwan and said, 'I must be married to your daughter this very day.' The Brahmin pandits were called and Rasalu Kuar said to them secretly, 'Declare that it will be auspicious only if the marriage is completed within an hour.' The pandits were pleased when he gave them a gold mohur and declared as he had bid them.

The Diwan got the booth and everything ready and they began to make the haldi climb on the bodies of the boy and girl. When the two met at the time of circling the pole, although Rasalu recognized the girl, she did not know that he was the boy who had been with her in the pit. Rasalu went round with her four times and then cried, 'I feel giddy, I must rest.' He undid the knot that held them together and went away behind the house and window, pretending to be asleep. Presently he got his horse and prepared to ride away. When she saw this the girl sang,

O brother, beard and head are become one  
How did you think of such an omen?  
We did four circles yet three remain.

And the boy sang in answer,

I am Rasalu. I never will return  
With my eyes I will never look on you again  
Maiden, remember the pit and what you said there.



The boy rode away into the deep forest. For two or four days he was hungry. The bees flew round him but brought him no honey. He found a stream, drank from it and continued on his way.

At last he came to a city where the Raja had made a great tank with a garden of flowers and trees with a well near by. Many people bathed in the tank and the water was spoilt for drinking. Rasalu Kuar went to the well and drank, then sat to rest in the shade of a kadam tree.

The Raja of that city had one daughter. That day she went to the garden to pick flowers. Seven maid-servants went ahead and seven went behind. She stood below a mango tree. The fruit of the tree was ripe and firm; the stalk of the plantain was smooth and lustrous; and the scent of the roses filled the mind with desire. When he saw the girl Rasalu Kuar sang,

In the forest I got no wood  
In the lake I found no water  
Rasalu Kuar stands hungry  
On the bank of the lake.

The serving maids did not hear him but went one by one into the garden picking flowers. When the girl saw the beauty of the flowers she sang,

The rose flowers at night  
You cannot pick it by pulling  
This flower does not grow in the Malin's house  
It does not go to the Raja's house.

The girl went on picking flowers and as she did so a thorn ran into her foot. She bent down to pull it out and when the boy saw her do this, he sang,

You came to pick flowers  
On your breast you put your hand  
The thorn of love has pierced you  
You are bending to the ground.

She did not listen, so he sang again,

You came to pick flowers  
On your jacket you put your hand  
The thorn of love has pierced you  
You are rubbing it to bring it out.

She still took no notice, but as she was thirsty she went to draw water from the well, and the boy sang,

The well is golden, its mouth is small  
The fair lady is drawing water.  
She stoops to fill her pot  
And her cloth is blown up by the wind.

And then at last the girl replied.

White is the stork. With one foot in the water  
It seems to meditate  
We thought it was a sadhu  
You are a mine of deceit.

The boy had nothing to say to this, and after a while the girl sang again.

On the river bank  
Stands the stork with white wings  
What does it know of pearls?  
It is an eater of shells.

Then they laughed at each other and became friends. The other girls gathered and said to the Raja's daughter, 'Why are you talking to this stranger? He must be some loiterer, a cheat or rascal from some other town. We will tell the Raja and have him killed.'

When he heard this, Rasalu Kuar was very angry. He took his sword and killed thirteen of the girls. But the fourteenth girl was behind the well and managed to escape. She ran to the Raja and came panting into his presence. 'What is the matter?' he asked. She told the story. The Raja was filled with rage; he got his weapons ready and had the war-drums sounded.

Rasalu Kuar heard the drums and said to the girl,

Here is your mother's house  
But for me it is a foreign land  
For you I will lose my life  
And who will send the news back to my home?

And the girl answered,

I will make a pyre of sandalwood  
By my brother Biran I swear  
If you lose your life for my sake  
I will leap into the flames.

At this Rasalu Kuar began to wonder if the girl was very intelligent. He tried to make her understand his danger, and said, 'I'll hide you in the well. Go right down under the water. Poke your head out for a moment, then go down again. After that, do exactly what I say.'

Rasalu Kuar put the girl in the well and sat quietly by. The Raja came with his army. When they approached, Rasalu Kuar called, 'Come brothers quickly and see what girl is in the well. Pull her out or she will be drowned.' The soldiers forgot their rage and ran to save the girl. 'How did she fall in?' they asked. Rasalu Kuar replied, 'Let us go to the Raja and I will tell him.' When he came before the Raja, he told him that he was the son of the Raja of the Punjab. Then he said, 'I found the girls quarrelling and they were trying to push your daughter into the well. At that I was so angry that I killed them.' The Raja asked his daughter, 'Is this true or false?' 'It is true,' she said. The Raja was very pleased. He took Rasalu Kuar to his own house and after a few days married him to his daughter.

After the marriage Rasalu Kuar stayed for some time in that city. But when they slept at night he placed a sword between him and his bride. The fish did not enter the trap, nor the hare its burrow; the crab sat outside its hole and all the pitchers of the palace were empty of water. 'I had a friend,' said the boy. 'He was so close a friend that we agreed that when one of us was married, he would not fulfil it until he knew that the other was married also. Now I must go to see my friend and discover whether he is married or no. Get me food ready for my journey.'

The girl prepared his food and bedding and tied up costly jewels and gold for the expenses of the journey. Rasalu Kuar mounted his horse and rode away. Presently he came to the city of another Raja. Here was a dharamshala and he slept there. The people told him of the beauty of the Raja's daughter and when they saw his wealth and beauty they said, 'You ought to marry her.'

Rasalu Kuar went at midnight to the palace and climbed up the wall until he was able to look through the window of the girl's chamber. She was swinging in a golden swing. Rasalu Kuar climbed quietly through the window and stood by one of the pillars of the swing. As the girl swung to and fro, she saw the shadows of the two pillars of the swing and a third pillar. She sang,

Are you a thief or a rascal  
Or are you a Raja's son?  
By the sandal pillar standing  
You say not a word.

And the boy replied,

I am no thief or rascal  
I am a Raja's son  
I have come in search of *ras*  
If you tell me where I can find it  
I will take the *ras* and go.

And the girl replied,

If you are *rasiya* I will give you *ras*  
As I will give it to the whole world  
In my *ras* you may burn yourself and die  
And burnt you will turn to ashes.

When Rasalu Kuar heard this he was angry and sang,

I am Rasalu, born of *ras*  
And I will give *ras* to the whole world  
I will undo your jacket and break your body  
Jumping on it, playing with it, I will break your body.

In this way the two became friends and the girl said, 'Marry me and take me away.' Rasalu Kuar answered, 'I cannot marry you by stealth, but I will certainly marry you.' The boy went back to the dharamshala.

Now the Raja had a horse named Hansraj. He promised that whoever would ride it could marry his daughter. Many Rajas had come but none could ride it.

The next day the Raja's barber came to cut Rasalu Kuar's hair. The boy gave the barber a gold mohur in payment. The barber was very pleased and when the next day and the next the boy also paid him with a gold mohur, he exclaimed, 'Sir, only the Raja's daughter is fit for you. There is a drum at the door of the palace. The rule is that whoever wants to try to ride the horse Hansraj must go and beat the drum.' Rasalu Kuar got ready and went to beat the drum. Other visitors struck it once or twice; this boy thundered on it for a long time. The Raja thought in his mind, 'What great warrior has come to my kingdom?' He came out and when he saw Rasalu Kuar and knew who he was, he had the horse saddled.

Directly Rasalu Kuar put out his hand to take the bridle the Raja struck the horse violently from behind with his whip. The horse leapt in the air pulling the rope out of Rasalu Kuar's hand. But the boy chased it and managed to get onto its back. The horse flew up into the sky, but the boy brought it down and the Raja had to give him his daughter in marriage. As a wedding gift he gave the boy a fine house and seven rent-free villages.

After the marriage Rasalu Kuar stayed for some time in that city. But when they slept at night he placed a sword between him and his bride, lovely and charming as she was. The fish did not enter the trap to swing there, nor the hare its burrow; the crab sat outside its hole; the visitors in the dharamshala slept that night on the verandah; and all the lamps in the palace were

empty of oil. 'I had a friend,' said the boy. 'He was so close a friend that we agreed that when one of us was married he would not fulfil it until he knew that the other was married also. Now I must go to see my friend and discover whether he is married or no. Get me food ready for the journey.'

The girl prepared everything for him and Rasalu Kuar mounted his horse and rode away. Presently he came to another city and stayed in the dharamshala. In that city was a great pillar and on the top of it was a small pitcher of brass. The Raja had proclaimed that whoever could hit and break the pitcher with an arrow could have his daughter in marriage. Many Rajas came but not one was able to hit the pitcher, and everyone who failed had a girl's ring put through his nose and he was imprisoned in the palace.

Rasalu Kuar bandaged his horse over one eye, tied his sword to its back and rode along the street up to the palace. The Raja's daughter was looking down from the attic and when she saw the boy she thought, 'Here comes a boy on a blind horse' and she sang,

On a blind horse put no saddle  
Your sword will not do its work  
However much sand you put in the oil-press  
You will get no oil from it.

And the boy answered,

Good is the marigold and good the cassia  
And good is the oil of linseed  
Who talks of river sand?  
I will get oil from a stone.

The girl sang again,

If the bamboo is crooked so is the split bamboo  
Your bow and arrow are crooked  
I thought you were a clever boy  
But I see you are a fool.

The boy replied;

O hero, do not lose your courage  
Without courage all is lost  
With courage wealth is quickly won  
Surely you will soon achieve it.

And the girl sang,

I want that kind of love  
That is like the fast die of the majit tree  
It does not run with washing  
But continues to life's end.

The boy sang again,

The hibiscus has blossomed  
They are selling it in the bazaar  
O maiden, I know that you are wise  
But you have made friends with a fool.

The girl answered him,

The rose is red : how deep the colour is  
Yet it has but little *ras*  
Now take a little *ras*  
But never break love that has once been joined.

The boy finally sang,

I am a winged bird in another's charge  
I have been sold in another's power  
My bones and my flesh may be anywhere  
But all my life is with you.

After this Rasalu Kuar went to the Raja and said, 'I will hit this pitcher with my arrow.' The Raja replied, 'Hit it if you can, but remember that if you fail I will put a ring in your nose and imprison you in the palace.' At this Rasalu Kuar said, 'Then I will not try; I am going away.' But all the people who had heard his singing and seen his great beauty, thought, 'If we let him go, our name will be ruined in every land, and no other Raja will come here and the girl will remain unmarried.' So they changed the rule and now said, 'He who hits the pitcher may marry the girl; he who misses may go on his way without her.'

They called Rasalu Kuar back and now he came with a parrot on his hand. The parrot said to him, 'Go round the pillar seven times and then shoot at it.' Rasalu Kuar did so and hit the pitcher and broke it with his arrow. Everyone was very pleased and the marriage was celebrated with great rejoicing. The Raja gave the boy a fine palace and half his kingdom.

After the marriage Rasalu Kuar stayed some time in his new palace. But when they slept at night he placed a sword between him and his bride, faithful and loving as she was. The fish did not enter the trap though the current of the stream flowed strongly; the hare stayed outside its burrow and the crab outside its hole. The clouds heavy with rain were blown away towards the mountains, and all the jars of the palace were empty of honey. 'I had a friend,' said the boy. 'He was so close a friend that we agreed that when one of us was married, he would not fulfil it until he knew that the other was married also. Now I must go to see my friend and discover whether he is married or no. Get me food ready for my journey.'

Now this girl loved Rasalu Kuar greatly; she was a girl who had never wantoned with the bright youths of the palace; her love was like the dye that is never washed out of a cloth. So when her love was leaving her she made nothing for the journey and tried to delay him. Rasalu Kuar was angry and got his horse ready but the girl stood before him with folded hands. 'Do not be angry,' she said. 'I will cook your food, but leave a sign with me before you go.'

Rasalu Kuar gave her a keonra tree. He planted it in the courtyard and said, 'If this tree dies, you will know that I am dead.' He put milk in a pot and dropped a thorn into it and gave it to her, saying, 'So long as the milk keeps fresh you will know that I am alive.' He put five mangoes in a jar of honey and gave them to her. 'If the mangoes dry up you will know that I am dead.' Then the girl prepared his food, rich and tasty, and Rasalu Kuar mounted his horse and rode away.

Presently he came to the city of another Raja. There was a well outside the city and near it a snake was swallowing a frog. Rasalu Kuar called his parrot and said, 'Shall I take the frog out of its mouth?' 'But the snake is hungry,' said the parrot. 'To deprive it of its food would be a sin.' 'But to let the frog die,' said the boy, 'will also be a sin.' Rasalu Kuar thought in his mind, then he cut a lump of flesh from his thigh and threw it to the snake. The snake dropped the frog and ate the flesh instead.

The frog said to the boy, 'O Rasalu Kuar, whenever you are in need of water remember me and I will help you.' The boy sat down by the well and rested and the frog hopped away.

Presently to that very well the Raja's daughter came to bathe, and her hiron-di ring dropped from her finger into the water. She wept for the ring and her attendants tried to find it but they could not. Rasalu Kuar saw the girl. The fruit of the lime tree was round and hard but small. The bushes grew thickly round the mouth of the little well. The girl sang,

There are red beads in the bazaar,  
The beads embrace the throat  
If you are wise you will buy them  
If you are a fool you'll go home empty-handed.

And the boy answered,  
An elephant must be of such a sort  
That it can go into the midst of the bazaar  
He who climbs on its back must not be shaken  
A thousand dogs bark in the bazaar.

Rasalu Kuar said, 'Why are you weeping, girl? Why do you sing this song to me?' The girl replied, 'My ring has fallen into the well.' 'And if I get you your ring?' 'You may marry me.' 'And if I fail?' 'I'll cut off your head and go away.' So the bargain was made in the presence of two or four witnesses. Rasalu Kuar remembered the frog and sang,

O frog, I said to the frog  
Hear O frog my word  
The ring of the Raja's daughter  
In a moment bring it out.

The frog jumped into the well, swam round a little, dived down, found the ring and threw it out onto the ground. The boy picked it up and put it on the girl's finger. He took her by the hand and led her to her father. The Raja said, 'What is this?' Rasalu Kuar told him what had happened, and the girl said, 'Yes' and the two or four witnesses said, 'Yes.' The Raja was satisfied and the two were married and stayed in the palace.

After the marriage Rasalu Kuar remained for some time in the city. But when they slept at night he placed a sword between him and his bride, though she was lovely as clear well-water and shone like her own ring. The fish did not enter the trap, though the waters came down in flood; the hare did not enter its burrow though the rain fell in torrents; the crab stayed outside its hole in spite of thundering clouds above. The royal elephants trumpeted outside their stable and all the cooking vessels of the palace were empty of rice-water. 'I had a friend,' said the boy. 'He was so close a friend that we agreed that when one of us was married, he would not fulfil it until he knew that the other was married also. Now I must go to see my friend and discover whether he is married or no. Get me food ready for the journey.'

But the girl sang,  
The chipi worm lives in the sea  
But it is crying for thirst  
I have married you  
But my hope is not fulfilled.

But the boy persuaded her, and she prepared his food and bedding and he mounted his horse and rode away.

Presently he came to the city of another Raja. There was a tank of clear water and clean stones. The boy thought he would wash his clothes there. He tied his horse to a mango tree and began to wash his clothes in the clear water. The Raja's daughter came by—there were seven serving-maids in front and seven behind—and when she saw the boy she thought in her mind, 'If only I could marry this boy.'



But Rasalu Kuar said not a word. There was a garden by the tank and the girl sat there and watched him. That garden was full of roses and the scent came to the boy as he worked. The bees moved from flower to flower. The fruit of the guava was a perfect round, firm and ready to be plucked. The secret nest of the koel was small and as yet there was no room for eggs to be laid there, but it was lined with down, warm, smooth and very sweet.

The girl sat watching till she was tired and sang,  
Wash your soft clothes  
Wash the turban from your head  
I filled my pot drop by drop from my nails  
But you said not a word.  
And the boy replied,  
Do not approach me  
Hide your face and go home  
Your *bindia* has fallen from your head  
Go where you will but do not come near me.  
The girl answered,  
We say Salu, Salu  
O Salu, hear my word  
In my father's palace  
There are two or four Saluwa as good as you.

The boy was annoyed and went away. The girl went home with lowered head. The boy thought, 'If there are two or four princes like me in the palace, how will I be able to marry her? But marry her I will and then I will desert her.'

Rasalu Kuar made his camp by the lake. He had his horse and the parrot with him, but he was lonely. Then the Raja sent his chaprassis to find a boy who was fit to marry his daughter. When they saw Rasalu Kuar, they took him to the palace and the Raja was pleased with his wealth and beauty and the marriage was celebrated with feasting and dances without delay.

After the marriage Rasalu Kuar stayed for some time in that city. But when they slept at night he placed a sword between him and his bride. The fish did not enter the trap, though now all the fields by the river were flooded; the hare did not hide in its burrow nor the crab in its hole; the koel did not sit in the little nest, and all the storebins of the palace were empty of grain. 'I had a friend,' said the boy. 'He was so close a friend that we agreed that when one of us was married, he would not fulfil it until he knew that the other was married also. Now I must go to see my friend and discover whether he is married or no.'

But this time Rasalu Kuar went away without asking his wife for food. As he rode through the forest night fell; he tied his

horse to a tree and climbed into the branches and slept. At midnight Mahadeo and Parvati came by and sat down under a kadam tree near where he was sleeping and began to play dice together. As they played Parvati fell asleep. Mahadeo sat alone, but he wearied of that and presently he undid his hair and took out a young and beautiful girl. He played with her, but when he saw that Parvati was about to awake he tied the girl up in his hair again and lay down to sleep. Then Parvati sat up and she too wearied of being alone. She undid her hair and brought out a young and handsome youth and played with him. When the cocks crowed, Parvati quickly tied the youth up in her hair again. Mahadeo awoke and they prepared to go on their journey.

Rasalu Kuar came down from the tree and fell at their feet. 'What trouble has afflicted you?' they asked. 'Tell us how we can help you.'

'There is nothing, but I beg you to come and accept my prasad.' The boy went to a nim tree, cleared the grass below it, and coudunged the place. He cut five plantain leaves and set them out in five places, and invited Mahadeo and Parvati to sit. When they had sat down they asked, 'There are only three of us; why are there five places prepared?' Rasalu Kuar said, 'Bring out those others from your hair, and there will be five of us.' They did so and the five ate their food. Then said Mahadeo, 'Ask what you will and I will give it to you.' 'I want nothing,' said the boy, 'except the dice you played with last night.'

Mahadeo said, 'But I have already promised my dice to Sirkatki Raja and no one in the world can defeat them. How can I give them to you?' Parvati said, 'But he knows our secrets; he may tell; we will have to give them.' Mahadeo said, 'Very well. But if you go to Sirkatki Raja don't let him know what dice you have.' He gave the boy the dice and went away.

Rasalu Kuar mounted his horse and came at last to Sirkatki Raja's city. A merchant's wife had come out along the road to relieve herself early in the morning and when she saw Rasalu Kuar and his great beauty she thought in her mind, 'What a pity that such a lovely boy should have his head cut off by our Raja' and she sang,

How beautiful is your sword and your knife  
How beautiful the colour of your body  
Who deceived you  
That you should ever come to our land?

The boy sang again,  
My sword and my knife are beautiful indeed  
And beautiful is my own country  
It was for my own pleasure  
That I came to your land.

The boy went on into the city. As he went by the palace the youngest of the Raja's seven daughters looked down from her attic and sang,

The marigold is fragrant and fragrant is the keonra  
 Fragrant too the pomegranate  
 How many brothers are there in your house  
 To bring honour to your mother ?  
 The boy answered,  
 My brother worships Siva  
 My father serves Kailas  
 She from whom I was born  
 Will help my life.

Singing the boy went into the palace. At the back of the palace was a well. Now Sirkatki Raja's custom was to defeat other Rajas at dice, cut off their heads, throw the heads into the well, stuff the bodies with straw and hang them up in the wind. Rasalu Kuar saw the bodies swaying to and fro and the heads in the well, and when they saw him all the heads burst out laughing. The boy was annoyed at this and cried,

Bodiless heads, what are you laughing at ?  
 Tell me the reason at once  
 Tell me the truth  
 Or there will be trouble.

The bodiless heads replied, ' We were not laughing in mockery, but for joy. When we saw you we thought that you would surely defeat this Raja. When you do so and have killed him, sprinkle his blood upon us and we will all live again. If you fail—well, we are just one short of a hundred ; there are ninety-nine of us in this well—and you will complete the number.'

Rasalu Kuar went round to the front of the palace and thundered on the drum in front of the door. The Raja came out and brought the boy into the palace with great honour. He kept the youngest girl hidden, but he dressed the others in all their finery and brought them out to entertain the boy. Then they sat down to gamble. Rasalu Kuar lost everything he had. At last he had nothing but his own body to stake. He forgot all about the dice of Mahadeo until his parrot whispered in his ear,

Bramha is your guru  
 Siva has given you a gift  
 Mahadeo has given you his dice  
 Use them to throw eighteen points.

Sirkatki Raja and the six girls looked at the parrot and wondered what it was saying. As their attention was distracted, Rasalu Kuar quickly changed the dice. Sirkatki Raja said, 'What shall I stake equal to your body?' The boy answered, 'A man's body is worth a lakh of rupees.' The boy threw the dice and won. Gradually he won back all he had lost, then he began to win from the Raja—his lands, his wife, his six daughters, his seventh daughter, until only the Raja's own body was left. In the end he won that also.

The parrot whispered again, 'Kill the Raja with your sword, but do not kill the Rani. Kill the six daughters with a club, for if their blood falls to the ground many new Rakshasa will be born. You may marry the youngest, for she is not a Rakshasa.'

Rasalu Kuar did as the parrot said. First he killed the six daughters. Then he cut off the Raja's head and sprinkled the blood over the ninety-nine Rajas in the well; they came to life and he distributed the villages of Sirkatki Raja among them. He made the Rani an allowance, enough for her food and clothes. He married the youngest girl and after the marriage left the place immediately.

Now the youngest daughter was very young. Presently they came to another city. Not far away in the woods was a lake and a temple on the bank. Rasalu Kuar thought, 'Let us stay here until she has grown up a little.' The temple was surrounded by trees and flowers. The small buds of the champa flower smelt sweet but there was no fruit on the orange trees. There was no well yet, but only a spring in the smooth sand and no grass growing by. The red rose had not yet blossomed, nor had any bee yet robbed the flowers of their honey.

Rasalu Kuar got a maina and a falcon and he and his little wife lived together with the three birds. When the girl was twelve years old, Rasalu Kuar saw her beauty and ripeness, but he said, 'Until I fight a tiger and kill it I will not go to her.' He left the girl with the three birds and went into the forest. He could not find a tiger, but he met a great wild boar with long tusks. He fought it, but neither won the battle.

In the temple garden, Rasalu Kuar had kept an antelope, young and free and beautiful. The antelope went one night to the city, spoilt someone's garden and came back to the temple garden. The Raja of that city was angry with his servants and dismissed them. He appointed a Pathan in their place. This Pathan slept by day and sat quietly watching by night. Next time the antelope came, the Pathan followed its tracks back to the temple. Near the lake, the tracks were lost in the long grass.

The Pathan searched here and there amid the grass for the tracks. The girl watched him from the temple window. She was ripe now and was thinking constantly of Rasalu Kuar. But the Pathan too was young and when she saw him she loved him, and sang,

Why are you looking down ?  
Down in the grass are only dirty tracks  
Lift up your eyes  
What sweet flowers are growing in the woods.

The Pathan replied,

Who planted the mango grove ?  
Who planted the pomegranates ?  
What Raja's daughter are you ?  
What Raja's wife ?

The girl sang,

It was I who planted the mango grove  
I planted the pomegranates  
I am the daughter of Sirkatki Raja  
The wife of Rasalu Kuar.

When he heard that the Pathan, pretending to be thirsty, came to the window of the temple and said, ' But bhauji, Rasalu Kuar is my elder brother ; I was looking for you both. Give me some water to drink.'

She came to the window and gave him water through the window. He took a little in his mouth and secretly spat it out, then asked for more, and more, till she was tired.

The bhauji said, ' How can I quench your thirst ? ' At last she called him into the temple and let him sit on Rasalu Kuar's bed, for she believed that he really was her dewar. The Pathan lay down on the bed saying he was tired and the girl laughed. Clouds gathered overhead, and there was a little thunder and a warning of rain. They heard the peacock cry in the forest and the crackling of a fire on the distant hills.

That night the Pathan did not go home. As a long *kotri* the fish swam into the trap, then as a little *turnu* escaped, but six times returned to play with its delicious fate. At last the crab pushed its way into its hole and the hare into its long-closed burrow ; the koel stirred in its nest and the sweetest honey in the world was taken by the bees. That night the storm broke ; great clouds swirled white about the temple ; rain fell in torrents and the thunder was like the sound of a thousand marriage drums.

That was the first night, but the Pathan stayed on and many days and nights went by. The two ate together and slept on

Rasalu Kuar's bed. They ate *pan* and spat against the wall till it was all red.

The girl's pomegranate breasts grew soft and her body, which had been firm and fragrant as the keonra flowers, grew tired and flabby. The parrot, falcon and maina saw what was happening and were very angry. One night as the two lay together, the maina spoke,

From its cage speaks the maina  
From its perch cries the falcon  
Do not lie together  
Or we will tell our brother.

The parrot remained silent in its wisdom, for it knew it would be killed. The Pathan said to the girl, 'We had better kill these Satans or we will have no happiness.' He got up from the bed and twisted the maina's neck and killed it. The parrot laughed and said, 'That was a very great rascal; it was always stealing my food. I am glad you killed it. I will never tell what you are doing.'

The falcon cut its cord and flew away. The parrot begged to be let out. 'I am so tired of this cage.' The girl let it go and it flew away into the forest. It came to a stream; on the banks Rasalu Kuar was fighting the great boar. The parrot sat in a tree above them and cried,

Salu, Salu, I said to Salu  
O Salu, hear my word  
There is a thief in your temple  
That daily steals your honey.

When he heard this, Rasalu Kuar said to the boar, 'I have work to do; let us make peace. I swear never to trouble you again.' The boar left him and Rasalu Kuar came back to the temple. He hid in the garden and watched until the Pathan came out and went towards the city. Then he came near and sang,

Who has cut down my mango grove?  
Who has picked my pomegranates?  
Who has been sleeping on my bed?  
Who has spat on my wall?

The girl answered,  
It was I who cut down the mango grove  
I picked your pomegranates  
I have been sleeping on your bed  
I spat on your wall.

Rasalu Kuar came into the temple, and the girl ran to wash his feet and give him food. But Rasalu Kuar refused to let her touch him and he would not eat. Next morning the antelope came and the boy followed it. After he had gone out, the Pathan came. The girl said, 'Eat your food quickly and go, or he will see you.'

The Pathan ate his food quickly and went away. Rasalu Kuar was hiding in the grass near the tracks of the antelope. When the Pathan reached the place, the boy came out and sang,

O thief, I call you a thief  
Listen thief to my word  
For a while stay on the hill  
And I will make you understand.

The Pathan replied,

Have I stolen your money or your grain?  
Have I stolen the vessels from your kitchen?  
It is your own flesh I have stolen  
And I am going home.

When he heard this, Rasalu Kuar said, 'Very well. Now take this spear. If you can kill me, you may take my wife; if not, I will kill you.' The Pathan threw the spear, but it only hit the ground a yard from Rasalu Kuar's foot. Then the boy took the spear. The Pathan bared his chest and the boy threw the spear straight into his chest and he fell dead. The boy ran to him, pulled out the spear, cut out some of the flesh and the liver and tying it in his cloth returned to the temple. As he went the crows and vultures swarmed down over the Pathan's body.

Rasalu Kuar gave the flesh to his wife and said, 'I have killed a fine sambhar today. Cook and eat the flesh.' He made the girl cook and eat it, but he himself refused. 'I cannot eat, for my stomach is full already.' She ate her fill and then the parrot spoke from its cage:

From the cage speaks the parrot, from its perch the falcon  
Man is so greedy that he eats the flesh of his friend  
He eats the flesh of the Moghul.

The girl understood what the parrot said and asked Rasalu Kuar what had happened. He said, 'I have killed your friend.' She said, 'At least let me see the body.' He took her to the place. The crows and vultures were busy eating the corpse. She cried,

O crow, crow, I said to the crow  
O crow, hear my word  
Leave the two eyes at least  
One day I will see him again.

But the crows replied,  
Your wisdom is burnt  
Your knowledge is consumed  
You betrayed Rasalu Kuar  
And got entangled with a Moghul.

The girl answered,  
The deer wanders in the forest  
The jackal roams at will  
Had I known he was a Moghul  
I would have killed him with my sword.

But just then one of the vultures tore off and was about to carry away the thing of joy on which she had played so often. 'Let it not be devoured,' she cried. The vulture dropped the thing and it splashed into the water; at once it was seized by the watchful crab and hidden in its hole.

Then Rasalu Kuar declared that he would return home. The girl begged him to take her with him, but he refused. She climbed to the top of the temple and watched him going slowly out of sight. Then she leapt down and died.

Rasalu Kuar went on through the forest till he came to the city of the sixth girl. In the evening he lay down to sleep and she went to bring his food from the palace kitchens. The rain poured down and he shut the door and slept. When she came she could not open the door, and she sang,

The sari is worth a lakh and a quarter

And its flowers can be seen

Why have you shut the cruel door?

O why have you forgotten me?

But Rasalu Kuar wanted to test her and he lay still. Presently the girl's lover came and she took the food to him, fed him, and he enjoyed her body. Then Rasalu Kuar knew that this girl was faithless. He said in his mind, 'If any of these girls has always sat to eat in my name and has not been to other men, I will eat from her hands but from no others.'

He went secretly from the palace, mounted his horse and went on his way. Soon he came to where the fifth girl was waiting for him. This girl had had many lovers. He sent her too to fetch him food and when she was gone he shut the door. She took the food instead to her lover of the moment and they ate and lay together. Then said her lover, 'Go quickly or perhaps your husband will come and quarrel.' The girl dressed as a man and started home. But Rasalu Kuar caught her on the way and cried,

Whoever wears shoes makes a noise

She has taken the form of a man

What *Rassia's ras* has she taken?

O why is she dressed as a man?



When he had said this, he killed the girl with his sword and rode away.

Now he came to the fourth girl, the girl who had loved him dearly. Many a young Raja had come to her claiming to be Rasalu Kuar, but she had always asked them to name the signs that had been left behind. Not one could do so correctly and her father had put them all in prison. When Rasalu Kuar reached the palace, he found the girl looking old and sad with loneliness and worry. He sang,

Your body is like the moon  
Your eyes are young antelopes  
Your hair hangs to the waist  
But how has the keonra flower been soiled ?

And she replied,

His keonra flower was burnt  
His country was consumed  
He who held the keonra flower  
Went to a foreign land.

Then Rasalu Kuar examined each of the signs. The keonra tree was fresh and green, bearing sweet flowers ; the milk had not turned sour ; and the mangoes in the honey were like new. That night at last the great spear flashed as it plunged into the well ; the blue sambhar passed down the forest path ; the grain on the threshing-floor at last was beaten out and yielded a rich harvest. The single star shone bright below two moons, and for all the thundering clouds and torrential showers its beauty was not obscured.

The next day Rasalu Kuar took his wife and they went on together towards the Punjab.

The third girl was watching the road for him, but she had two lovers in the house. When he heard of it, he killed her and went on his way.

The second girl was pregnant with a child seven months, and Rasalu Kuar killed her also. At last he came to his own city. His first bride had long since run away with a Sardar in the Raja's army. Rasalu Kuar made his camp outside the city and sent a message to his father that he had come.

The Raja sent his army and all the people of the city came out to welcome home the young prince with his bride. As he had triumphed over Sirkatki Raja his father gave the government of the kingdom into his hand, and Rasalu Kuar and his Rani ruled over the Punjab in peace for many years.

# FOLKLORE OF THE KOLS

BY WALTER G. GRIFFITHS

## I

In the Census Reports Kols are listed amongst primitive tribes in three areas: the Central India Agency, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces. Although they have lost their tribal language and speak the Hindi prevalent in the areas in which they reside they belong to the Proto-Australoid race of people. Other groups allied to the Kols include the Santals, Kharias, Mundas, Korkus, Baigas and Bhils.

The Census of 1931 reported 368,653 Kols distributed approximately as follows: Central India Agency 200,200; Central Provinces 91,500 and the United Provinces 76,800. Rewa State is their centre of distribution and about 50% of the total Kol population live there. Everywhere they look back to Rewa as their homeland.

The most primitive Kols are forest dwellers, but on the whole they are serfs, owning no land, and usually are engaged as field coolies, stone breakers, burden bearers and the like. They are good workmen, honest and straightforward.

It appears that on the whole the Kols of Central India are not particularly interested in fables and have but little folklore. The Kols pride themselves mostly on their music and song, and the stories which follow have not been easy to collect. No trace was found amongst them of bards or professional story-tellers. No doubt, however, there is much lore hidden away, but it is not obtained when it is directly asked for; the best account is usually found when the story incidentally comes up. Like most primitive people, the Kol knows more than he willingly reveals. The following stories were collected from Kols and represent stories current to-day.

## II

### THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH

Brahma is the creator in the Hindu Triad; associated with him are Siva, the destroyer, and Vishnu, the preserver. Certain Kols indicated that it was Brahma whom they considered as the Creator of this world. In the beginning, everything was water, and there was not a bit of dry land anywhere. Brahma brought the earth into form as follows. First he took the form of a fish and explored the depths of the primeval ocean. But a fish is handicapped in that it cannot carry anything. So Brahma became a tortoise and from some place beneath the primeval ocean, the Kols know not whence, which he had explored as a fish, Brahma somehow got some mud which he put on his back and brought it to the surface. It was from this mud that the earth was shaped.

This story bears a resemblance to the story of the Incarnations of Vishnu. The fish and the tortoise are the first and second respectively of the ten chief *avatars* of Vishnu. But the content is quite different, especially in the case of the fish.

## III

### THE ORIGIN OF INSECTS

Kols account for the presence of "insects" such as "snakes, scorpions and wasps" in the following way. Sankara was the greatest of all ascetics. He lived very simply without clothes and covered his body with ashes. The dirt of his body when it fell to the earth became alive, and so insects such as the ones named above came into being.

## IV

## THE ORIGIN OF PEOPLE

THE Kol story does not make it clear how the first people came into existence, for they begin with a primitive couple. The man was named Baiju, which, they say, is the same as Bhil, and the woman was Shivari. These are the parents of all living races. The generation that came of this union is called Bhil, because Baiju means Bhil. In the beginning, then, all were Bhils. But now this family has separated into many races, and the present condition may be likened to a tree with one root, yet having many branches and leaves. These different branches were the result of the deeds and beliefs of individuals. For example, in the course of time among the Kols a certain *huri* began to keep pigs, and other Kols, such as Rautiyas, would have nothing to do with such people. They are a different branch. Such events made distinctions within the Kol tribe. Other differences arose, and now the Kols are split up into many divisions, yet like the tree are all one. Baiju still lives as a god in a place in Rewa State called Baijnath. In his shrine a very large image of Shivari is also found. She is pictured as black and fat with a large gold ring in her nose. Of course Baiju's image is in this temple, and his brother Baijnath, but they are not together. There are also images to Bhagawanji and Mahadeoji. Many castes go there to worship, but they have respect only for the images of Bhagawanji and Mahadeoji, and not for Shivari and Baiju. Only the Kols know their worth and serve them.

This story illustrates the way Kols mix things together and also of the distinction made by caste people between their gods and those of the Kols.

The name of Shivari often appears in connection with stories of the origin of the Kols. Previous note was made of this in connection with stories of origin. Shivari is usually called the mother of all Kols and is linked to the story of Savari in the Ramayana, although it will be noted that the content is quite different. Once, when Rama, Lakshmana and Sita were on their way into the forest on their voluntary exile, it was discovered that they were in need of help. Savari also lived in the forest, and she at once began to serve Rama. Savari, the Kols say, was particularly fond of a jungle plum called *Ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). She knew that the others would like them too, and she used to gather them and offer them to Rama and Lakshmana. One day, however, she forgot what she was doing, and that the plums were not for herself, and as she picked them, she took a bite of each and dropped them into her basket. When she arrived back at the *ashram* after this trip, she suddenly met Rama, and he eagerly asked her for some plums. She looked into her basket and saw the half-eaten plums, but was ashamed to tell him that she had forgotten him and had thought only of herself. So she did not offer the basket to Rama. Ramaji, however, was very persistent, and finally she had to present to him the basket filled with half-eaten *bers*. Rama asked Lakshmana if he would eat some, but when he saw that they were already touched, he refused to do so. Rama, however, thought them fit to eat, and both he and Sita partook of them. They did not mind it as Lakshmana seemed to do. Later on when Lakshmana had been struck down by an arrow, he was only revived when he ate these plums. So he should have eaten them in the first place. Thus she served them faithfully for the period of their exile, and when they were preparing to leave the forest, Shivari asked for a boon. She asked for two things: First, for many descendants, and secondly, for at least a *seer* of grain daily for each, so that they might never starve, and clothes to cover the body. These boons were immediately granted, and so the Kols multiplied. There are to-day thousands of Kols, they relate, who are indebted to the mercy of Bhagawan in the form of Rama.

The basis for the Kol stories related here and also at an earlier place, appears to be found in Valmiki's Ramayana, Book III, Canto LXXV. The

accounts nevertheless are very different and indicate the way a story is taken hold of and made quite different as it passes orally in legend and story. In the Ramayana Sita does not appear at all, as she has already been stolen away by the wicked demon King of Ceylon, Rawana, and Rama and his brother Lakshmana were in search of her. In their journeyings they came to the edge of a great lake called Pampa where they found in a hermitage an aged female ascetic of whom they had heard before, named Savari. When they arrived, she reverently embraced the feet of the two brothers and confessed that it had been her life-long desire to get a vision of them. To her Rama was the greatest of heavenly beings, and now that she had seen him, she knew she could depart in peace to paradise. She had been already told of his expected coming to the hermitage, and in preparation for his visit had collected the world-famous fruits of the hermitage for his comfort and sustenance. Rama requested the aged woman to show them the hermitage which was built up by the famous Matanga who was a low-caste Chandala who had, by means of great austerities and asceticism, attempted to procure for himself the rank and status of a Brahmin. His works were great and would have to be rewarded, but to become a Brahmin was not possible in this world-order, and the gods tried to persuade him that his attempt was irrational. But he kept on, and as he could not be made a Brahmin, he was eventually made a god. Long before the coming of Ram, Matanga had ascended into the heavens, and yet the flowers with which he had bedecked the altars had not withered nor decayed. Savari showed the friends all the wonders of the hermitage. After Rama had seen all, Savari told him that she was anxious to depart this world and join the ascetics above, whom she had served so long. So before the presence of Rama and Lakshmana she entered into a fire and ascended up into the sky, adorned, it is said, not in the ascetic garb of bark, deer skin and matted hair, but with glorious apparel garlanded for heaven. The whole sky was lighted by her splendour, and as a result of her life of simplicity and piety, she gained immortality.

## V

## THE SPREAD OF MANKIND

It will be noted that this story says nothing about boons nor descendants. The story runs that in the beginning Bhagawan created all men equal. There was neither high nor low, rich nor poor; all were contented and had the supply of every need. In the course of time Bhagawan conceived the plan of building a great fort called Bandhan to be located in Rewa. Many labourers were needed for this task, so Bhagawan sent Lakshmana to find labourers. He went everywhere seeking workers but could find no one willing to do this hard work, for no one was in need of work. Moreover they said that they themselves would gladly employ labourers in their own projects if Bhagawan would only supply them. Thus it appeared to Lakshmana that the people would not only do no work, but would also employ any labourers who were brought in; so, much disappointed, he returned to Bhagawan. Bhagawan too was disappointed, and began to think of what they should do. At last he conceived the idea of making all the people poor, for then, he reasoned, they would be glad to work. This he did, and after a time, when the people had experienced the pangs of poverty and want, he again sent Lakshmana. Now this time he found that all were eager for employment and a daily wage. They were put to work and the fort was built as first planned. When the work was finished, Bhagawan had no further plan for them, and there were no wages forthcoming. Men were still poor, and in order to get work so that they might live, men began to move out over the face of the earth. They spread thus from Rewa everywhere, and the earth became peopled.

## VI

## THE ORIGIN OF KOLS

There are several stories recorded elsewhere concerning the origin of the Kols. This story may supplement them. While Rama was in exile in the forest, many of the gods took compassion on him and descended to the earth in human form in order to assist him. These gods called themselves Kolas. After the fourteen-year period of exile was over, Rama returned to his kingdom and became King of Ayodhya. The Kolas went back to heaven—Indrapuri. The Kols of to-day are the descendants of the gods who were in the forest along with Rama. This proves the divine origin and nature of the Kols.

## VII

## HOW THE KOLS LOST THEIR RIGHTS

From the beginning the Kols enjoyed many rights and in their prestige were second to none. Once Shivari was going on a journey. A man was hired to carry her luggage in a *hanwar*—two baskets attached to the ends of a bamboo pole slung over the shoulder. Thus they started off. After they had gone some distance, the man said to Shivari: 'Why do you walk, there in the field is a horse for you to ride upon.' This gave Shivari an idea. The horse was brought, but she could not get on it, and so she took an axe and began to chop at the horse's legs to shorten them. The man shouted: 'What are you doing?' She replied: 'I wish to prepare two pegs out of the horse's legs so that I may use them to mount the horse as he is too high for me.' The man said: 'Fool, you know nothing; you are spoiling the horse. Take this *hanwar* and I will show you how to ride a horse.' So he gave to her the *hanwar* with her luggage within the baskets and jumping on the horse, he rode away. From that day on Shivari had to carry her own luggage everywhere, and her descendants became coolies. The man was really Bhagawan in the form of Ramachandraji and took away from her the high privileges which were really hers, because she was so stupid. Thus Bhagawan deceived the Kols and cheated them of their rights and ever since they have been burden bearers and coolies.

There are other stories about the horse and the dispossession of the Kols by others. A Brahmin was once ploughing a field, and a Kol happened to pass that way on horseback. The Kol was much interested as he had never witnessed ploughing before, and observing the Brahmin the Kol descended and after watching the process a while, wondered if he could also do it. To test himself he caught hold of the plough and attempted to use it. The Brahmin then jumped on the horse and rode away and was never seen again. And the Kol tried to plough the field and has been ploughing ever since. It was really Bhagawan in the form of a Brahmin that deceived the foolish Kol, and Kols have never ridden horseback since that time.

## VIII

## DEPRIVED OF BREAD

In olden days Kols had plenty to eat, but they did not know how to eat their food properly. Instead of breaking their *chapatis* with their hands, they used axes upon it. This displeased Bhagawan, and he sent poverty amongst them, and Kols nowadays get their daily bread only after very hard labour.

There is another tradition linking the horse and bread together. The story goes as before that, when the Kols were first upon the earth, they had plenty to satisfy all their needs. They had horses to ride upon, plenty of wheat and *ghni* and fruits. They lived happily, acquired much wealth, and became the most powerful in all the regions about. But they could not ride

upon horses properly. They conceived the plan of shortening their horses' legs with axes, so that they would not have so much difficulty in mounting and would also not have to fall so far. They also began to chop up their *chapatis* with axes. When Bhagawan came to know of all this, he was very angry and took away the axes and all the horses. He gave the Kols sickles and commanded that thereafter they should never ride a horse and that they should work as labourers in reaping the harvests of others.

## IX

## THE LOSS OF THE SACRED THREAD

In the beginning the Kols were the highest of all peoples and wore the sacred thread which is to-day the right only of the twice-born castes. But once for some reason, Bhagawan called the people together and put the Kols last, thus angering them greatly for they felt humiliated in the presence of all. In their anger and to show their disregard for the sacred thread, they tore them off and scattered them in all directions. These became attached to trees and bushes and at once began to grow and are the *Amarbel* plant (*Cuscuta reflexa*), the English Dodder. The *Amarbel* is a greenish yellow parasitic plant which is found in many parts of Central India. Any bit of it will attach itself to a tree or bush and grow easily. 'Now,' say the Kols, 'we would challenge any Brahmin to do the same. Let them throw away their sacred threads. There was life in ours and theirs are dead.'

## X

## HOW THE KOLS BECAME SEVEN FAMILIES

At first there was but one family of Kols, the descendants of Shivari. This family besought the favour of Bhagawan in prayers which were unselfish and which asked not for wealth or food. Bhagawan therefore blessed them and their number increased so greatly, above all other families on earth so that there was no room for them to live together. So Bhagawan gave them permission to separate into seven groups, and thus the seven *kuris* of the Kols arose. The groups named in this story are (1) Thakuriya, (2) Mawasi, (3) Binjwar, (4) Khairwar, (5) Khangar, (6) Pawai and (7) Kurha.

## XI

## HOW THE KOLS CAME TO BE POPULAR

Sehai and Kuhai were two sisters who were very rich but lacked things to eat, being thus forced to gather the fruits of the forest in which they lived. One day Rama and Lakshamana passed by their house. They were hungry and sought food from the sisters. The sisters had nothing but fruits to offer them, and Rama received these gladly, but Lakshamana threw them away in anger. The brothers then departed on their quest, but not without the curse of the sisters upon Lakshamana for his rudeness. In the course of a battle in the attempt to rescue Sita Lakshamana was struck by an arrow and fell unconscious. No one was able to bring him back to his senses. Then Rama remembered the curses of the sisters and sent a messenger to bring some of the rejected fruit. This was brought and forced into his mouth; as it touched his lips, he at once became well and regained the full use of his senses. Then Sehai (really Shivari) asked for a boon and Rama replied: 'I am very much pleased with you; go and flourish in the world and increase the population of the world with many children.' From that time the Kols have had large families and are found in every part of India.

## XII

## HEROES AMONG THE KOLS

Apart from the Kol woman Shivari, the Kols do not seem to have heroes or heroines in their legends. It is said that there is not even one hero among the Kols and the following story explains why that is and also explains the origin of their musical abilities.

Once Bhagawan called people together out of every community in order to bless them and give them a boon. Groups from everywhere set off to the place of *darshana* and among them were the Kols. Other groups reached the place where the boons were to be granted, but the Kols never arrived. It so happened that as they were proceeding on their way, the Kols heard the cry of the birds known as the *Sath Bhai* or Seven Sisters (*Crateropus canorus*). (The sarcasm of the story is to be found in the fact that these birds have a very unmusical cry, one which grates upon the ear.) Hearing the cry *pay, pay, pay* of the *Sath Bhai*, and thinking this to be their boon, the Kols returned home. They took it that Bhagawan had given them the gift of musical expression, and from that time they became adept at the beating of drums and singing, for which they are famous all over India.

## XIII

## THE DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS

After the creation of the earth Bhagawan peopled it with all kinds of animals. But the problem was which one of them should be put to the plough in order that the ground might be tilled? First he tried the elephant, but he was too big and could not turn about in the field, and in addition he tramped down the ploughed earth. So he tried the camel next but he too was not satisfactory. Finally he created the oxen and tried them in the plough, and they were just right and with them Bhagawan succeeded in turning up the soil. So Bhagawan gave the cattle a gentle and kind nature so that man might have them with him and use the oxen to till the land. Thus they were domesticated.

## XIV

## WHERE AGRICULTURE STARTED

In the beginning certain peoples were created by Bhagawan specifically for the purpose of farming. These were the Kurmis, Lodhis, Kols and Gonds. It was with these groups that agriculture first started. But there are others who maintain that all people were of the jungle and that Bhagawan gave to them first the cattle which he had created, and therefore they left living off of fruits and roots and began to grow crops.

## XV

## WHY WE HAVE A LITTLE FINGER

There is a story among Kols that in the distant past when the Pandus and the Kurus fought in Hindustan Shahadeo Pandu desired to see for himself just how one might become possessed of Shardamai. So he thought he would try an experiment. He brought before the goddess a coconut, some *sindhur*, *ghi* and fire, and began to make a *hom* offering. As he was doing this, he suddenly became possessed of the *devi* and his little finger happened to rest in the *hom* fire. As he was in the state of unconsciousness due to the *bawa* he did not notice this fact, and the tip of the last finger on the hand began to slowly burn away. Ever since man has had a little finger for it was shortened in the *hom* fire.

## XVI

## THE COMING OF DISEASES

There were once seven sisters in heaven who were sent from there to the earth to live among men. As they left Bhagawan, they asked him for boons, for they said, unless they had power of some kind no one would respect them nor would men worship them. It happened that each was granted a boon. Khhermai, called Bhagavati, chose the power of smallpox. If anyone should fail to please her, she will appear in that person in the form of smallpox. Or, if not that, some other in the family will be with the pox, euphemistically called *mata*, 'mother.' She was given the power to remain in full control

of their person for two and a half days, and during that time the sick person should be worshipped, for it really means the worshipping of Bhagavati, and so men must respect and honour her for her power. Further honour must be shown by the whole family in the avoidance of certain foods such as pulses and *ghi*. No frying pan should be used, and the inmates of the house should not wear leather shoes.

## XVII

## THE KOLS AND MAHADEO (SIVA)

The Kols have several stories in which they speak of a character which they call Baiju or Baijnath. One example has already been given. From some stories it appears that he is the husband of Shivari. Kols say that Baiju under the name of Baijnath and the god Mahadeo must always be worshipped together, but Baijnath should be worshipped first.

One story relates that Baijnath excelled all others in his devotion to Bhagawan, and when the time was right, he asked Bhagawan for a boon. He asked that at the time of worship, water might first be poured over him and then over Mahadeo. This was granted, and he used to worship Mahadeo and beat him with a stick five times a day.

A longer form of this story from another section of Central India is as follows. In this account Baijnath is spoken of as a Rautia Kol, a farmer who worked daily in his fields. He had this peculiar characteristic, however, which was that as he went by a certain temple, he used to enter in and beat Mahadeo with a stick five times a day. The reason for this strange behaviour is known only to Baijnath. Once it so happened that he was so busy in the fields that he forgot to do so and when he was almost home from work he recalled his omission. At once he decided to return to the dwelling place of Mahadeo but on the way he found that for some strange reason the river was in spate and that it would be very dangerous to cross it. He decided to wait a bit, but there was no improvement in the river. He soon saw that the sun was about to set, and the day would be gone, so he decided to jump into the river and swim through it. He did this very dangerous thing and going to the temple gave Mahadeo five blows with the stick. On his return he had to swim the river again. Now Mahadeo, who saw all this, was afraid, for he realized that Baijnath was a man of purpose and would not be turned aside by dangers, so he decided that he must do something to please Baijnath. With this in mind Mahadeo waited till Baijnath arrived the next day intent on beating him. Greeting him he said: 'Baijnath, I wish to give you a great boon. It is that people will worship you and pour water on you first and after that they will worship me. If they should fail to do this to you, they will have no fruit of their labours at all. So now that you have this *bardan* please do not beat me any more and give me release from this daily beating you are giving me.' Hearing this, Baijnath was very happy and Mahadeo was beaten no more. So Kols always worship Baijnath first.

It is now established that Shiva or Mahadevi worship is very ancient. Evidences of this are found in the Mohenjodaro civilization. A Census Report notes that 'Bhils, Savaias and the Korkus all trace their origin to Mahadeva, though it is possible that the tradition may be a latterly acquired Hindu Idea.' (1931—I: 3 B p. 63). Perhaps this story is a memory of a strife with groups who did trace their ancestry back to Mahadeva. The Kols frequently identify Baiju or Baijnath with the Bhils.

## XVIII

## HOW THE CAT BECAME A HOUSEHOLD PET

Once Mahadeo sent a cat to spy upon a certain home. He wanted to know whether there was a fire in there at that particular time. This cat had stayed with Mahadeo for a long time and obeying his commands, she went to the



house where she found the fire burning and milk nicely warmed beside it. There was also some freshly prepared butter on the floor. The cat tasted the butter and found it so delicious that she ate it all. Next she drank the milk, and feeling very comfortable, she curled up to sleep beside the cosy fire. She never more left the house, for she preferred it with its warmth, and butter and milk to the treatment and food she had with Mahadeo. Since that time the cat has become a household animal, and it is a great sin to kill one, as it came directly from Mahadeo.

## XIX

## WHY THE TIGER FEARS THE RED DOG

The wild dog, a red dog of India, (*Cyon dakhnensis*) is common in the wilder jungles of Central India. It is much feared by the animals of the forest, including the tiger, and tigers are sometimes killed by them. These dogs always hunt in packs containing often as many as thirty animals, and the pack does not give tongue, coming suddenly upon its prey.

The story goes that once Mahadeo quarrelled with Parvati his wife. He was so annoyed with her that he left home and went into voluntary exile in the forest. Parvati was sorry and wanted to get him back, but was too proud to humble herself before him. Finally she decided to frighten him back and thus cause him to return. She was sure that if she could send a tiger after him to annoy him that Mahadeo would surely fly to his home for safety. So she used her divine powers to make a tiger go to him. But this was in vain, for Mahadeo outwitted her, as he was a god. He picked up some dry pieces of wood and threw them toward the tiger saying, *Chhu, chhu*. The wood became the wild dog of the Indian jungles. They do not fear the tiger and attack it in packs. These dogs attacked the tiger and with their tails spread urine in his eyes. This made the tiger blind and fearful and he hastened away.

Since that time Kols have held the tiger as sacred because it is associated with the goddess Parvati, and also the wild dog because Mahadeo created them to protect himself. This also accounts for the fact that tigers are to-day afraid of the red dog. Neither the tiger, the jungle dog, nor any dog should be killed.

## XX

## HOW ILL TEMPER BRINGS DISASTER AND ITS CURE.

Biran, a Kol, was the servant of a *Raja* with a very bad temper. This king constantly used bad language to everyone he met and this annoyed Bairam immensely. Once this *raja* gave a great feast to which many people were invited. Biran and his friend Dadul also came. After the food was taken, someone got something very bitter in his mouth and was forced to spit it out on the costly rug on which they were seated for their meal. This was seen by the *raja* who became very angry and used disgusting *gali*. Many people left, among them Biran and Dadul. The rainy season was about to come, but the rains were delayed. What was the matter? No one could tell, and week after week passed and no cooling drops. They did not know that it was all due to the ill temper of the *raja*.

The farmers felt that they must break up the ground so they might catch any rain that fell. Bairam was ploughing along with others when his plough turned up a frog, and the frog cried out in his dismay. Bhagawan heard this, and thinking that the frog was very thirsty, he sent rain upon the earth, and the wickedness of the *raja* could no longer restrain its fall. But the *raja* was still angry and called for Bairam and scolded him. Nevertheless his words had no more power to bring a curse upon the land.

This story shows that magic can remove a curse.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

ORIGINAL notes, queries, answers to queries, quotations from journals and newspapers for this section should be sent to Verrier Elwin, B.Sc. (Oxon), F.N.I., Patangarh P. O., Dindori Tahsil, Mandla District. Contributors are requested to type in double space on one side of the paper only, to give full and exact references and to follow carefully the suggestions 'To Contributors' published from time to time in *Man in India*.

### I

#### WHAT IS FRAZERISM?

I write to protest against the suggestion made by Dr. Elwin in your Notes and Queries in your June number that the term 'Frazerism' is or could be used as a term of reproach. There may or may not be truth in the criticism that Frazer did not keep up with the studies of theory or that he tended to lapse into a false rationalism, but I cannot but quarrel with the statement, whether Prof. Lowie's or anyone else's, that he made constant such lapses. I don't think they can be pointed out. Further, while it is perfectly true that theory and practice in anthropology have moved on since the publication of *The Golden Bough*, on which, with *Totemism and Exogamy*, Frazer's reputation primarily rests, I submit that that move forward is very largely due to Frazer's work itself. Not only did he clear up the comparative field so effectively that investigation was almost compelled to move on to individual studies in the fields of religion, psychology and economics, but he provided a very large part of the general background which gave meaning to individual studies, as well as so profoundly influencing the culture of his day as to cause these studies to be undertaken. Nor is it a reproach that he worked in his study and not in the field. The student is an essential complement to the field-worker and if some of Frazer's conclusions be erroneous, many are undoubtedly justified. He himself, however, never claimed any credit for anything except the collection and collation of facts, and I think Dr. Elwin is in error when he speaks of ideas and customs 'which when seen in relation to their entire cultural background are not really comparable at all.' I venture to think that he will not find it easy to justify that by specific instances. That even if he can, I should still maintain that in the development of the study of anthropology, the comparative stage which Frazer represents was necessary to whatever intelligent growth and development has taken place since and that the genius of that great man made it possible to reach in a single generation a stage of development which might otherwise have taken a great deal longer. Frazer's work has been of the first importance in the development of anthropological studies and to write of it contemptuously because the prevailing tendency runs on functional or sociological lines is to ignore the fact that it was he who really provided the philosophy which underlies most anthropological work to-day and who provided the comparative background which gives localized and environmental studies position and perspective in a human scheme.

J. H. HUTTON.

### II

Prof. J. H. Hutton has protested against the suggestion made by Dr. Verrier Elwin in the 'Notes and Queries' Section of *Man in India*, June Number (1944) 'that the term "Frazerism" is or could be used as a term of reproach.' Obviously I do not come into the picture at all, but as the discussion evidently arose out of my review of Dr. Elwin's book on *Maria Murder and Suicide*, I think I owe a personal explanation.

Nobody denies the great rôle played by Sir J. G. Frazer in the progress and development of anthropological science. As Prof. Hutton aptly remarks, 'Not only did he clear up the comparative field so effectively that investigators were almost compelled to move on to individual studies in the light of function, psychology and economics, but he provided a very large part of the general background which gave meaning to individual studies, as well as so profoundly influencing the culture of his day as to cause these studies to be undertaken.' The extreme functionalists may not agree with this statement, some would argue perhaps that 'Frazer's studies proved the futility of the comparative method so that the functional approach became a historical necessity' but I should think that Frazer, in spite of handicaps consequent to inadequate information or imperfect technique, set the stage on which the future workers with first-hand knowledge of savage cultures and their implications, could forge better and more efficient methods of investigation and through them point out the inadequacy of the comparative method. To-day, whether we are or not, we know that cultures are not isolated but very much interdependent. Even within the same culture, traits are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them for purposes of comparison. The comparative method is fruitful if every culture could be treated as an isolated pattern. Such a treatment is also not logically desirable, because, as Franz Boas has put it, 'analogies of cultural traits are often fallacious and lead to faulty identification of diverse phenomena.'

Frazer's knowledge was encyclopaedic, his resources abundant and his capacity for interpretation unimpaired, yet his methods are not exactly those which the field investigator could use with profit. In any treatise on the history of ethnology, Frazer's contributions would certainly figure prominently but his was, to my mind, an intellectual grapple with the problem of culture under the handicap of diffused and diverse knowledge. Hutton himself is doubtful whether Frazer did or did not 'keep up with the studies of theory or if he tended to lapse into a false rationalism.' He admits that, 'if some of Frazer's conclusions be erroneous, many are undoubtedly justified,' that is perhaps natural to all philosophy, even to the philosophy of science as well. I am sure, as an outstanding field investigator himself, Hutton would agree with us, functionalists, that Frazer's 'methods of study,' leave the field investigator insufficiently equipped in theory, and extremely nervous in practice.

D. N. MAJUMDAR

I find myself, very much to my surprise, involved controversially over a great scholar whom I deeply admire but whom I do not consciously follow. Dr. Hutton first rebuked me in *Nature* for suggesting that Frazer was rather uncritical in the use of his sources. Then Dr. Verrier Elwin rebuked me for being a Frazerite, and finally Dr. Hutton rebukes me again for not being one. But it was not I who used the word 'Frazerism' as a term of reproach. Dr. Majumdar, like many other Functionalists, tends to disparage Frazer and in my brief note in the June number of *Man in India* I tried to discover why. With all the positive words of praise in Dr. Hutton's letter I am in entire agreement, and indeed my own first paragraph in my original note goes even further than Dr. Hutton himself. But I do not think that any of our gods should be regarded as exempt from criticism.

VERRIER ELWIN.

#### THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF INDIAN ETHNOGRAPHY

In an article by O. R. Baron von Ehrenfels on 'The Dual System and Mother-right in India' (*Anthropos*, Tome xxxv/vi, 1940-41, pp. 655-680) there is a timely warning that scholars have over-neglected the great 'untouchable' populations of India.

'The chief interest of both European and Indian explorers is usually diverted from the 'Depressed and Backward classes,' i.e., the so-called "untouchables," either by their interest in Vedic Hinduism and the Islamic civilization of India, or in that for the scarce and fast disappearing remnants of the last non-Hinduized jungle tribes.

'This is the explanation of the paradoxical fact that the sociology, folklore and social ethnology of some 70 millions of depressed classes in India is perhaps less known to the scientific world than that of a number of much less numerous and scientifically in some cases even less important tribes of, say, Australia and Melanesia. The hardships of desert and jungle, it seems, are easier surmountable for the ethnographer than the barriers of caste-discrimination, even if he does not belong to the caste system himself! For even if the ethnographer might have been free of all prejudices against the "primitives," still they themselves, the objects of his scientific investigation, won't have done the same. They will very rarely be brought to an attitude of mind comparable in any way to the open-minded, straightforward and friendly behaviour, which not only African, Melanesian and most of all other "primitives," but even Indian jungle tribes have been found to adopt towards any well-meaning ethnologist after a short time.'

#### FORTHCOMING MONOGRAPHS

There is news that two substantial contributions to Indian ethnography by missionary scholars are now ready for publication. One is an account by Dr W. G. Griffiths of the Kols of Central India and will be published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. The other is Father Stephen Fuch's weighty monograph *The Children of Hari*, a study of the weavers of Nimar, which is to be published by a publisher. It is greatly to be hoped that funds will be found to make this work available to scholars.

V. E.

#### SAHEBOSUM

In January 1945, on my way from Dokaripanga to Kajulanju in the Bodo Kimidi Maliahs, I was suddenly confronted by a pair of tall wooden human figures placed very effectively at the head of a pass. The local Savaras said that these represented Sahebosum and Memsahaboboi. Some years ago there was an epidemic in Dokaripanga and the Kuran-magician declared that it was due to Sahebosum (the 'sahib god') and his wife. This god, who is always on tour, spoke through the mouth of the Kuran: 'I live in the land of the sahibs and go wandering with my wife over the world.' The Savaras replied, 'Take what sacrifice you will and go away.' The god replied, 'I want no sacrifice. Carve figures in our honour and put them on the path towards the west and I will leave you alone.'

V. E.

## REVIEWS

VERRIER ELWIN, *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal*, (Oxford University Press for *Man in India*, Bombay, 1944).

In this brilliant collection, Verrier Elwin has assembled 150 tales from that wild and mountainous country which comprises the Eastern part of the Central Provinces and the Eastern States of Rewa, Kawardha, Sarangarh and Bastar. Parts of this tract such as the Baiga chak are peopled by only a few tribes but in the region as a whole, Gond, Muria, Agaria, Baiga, Kuruk, Lohar and Dhoba live in close proximity. All of these tribes have still in certain respects their own cultures but far more than the tribes of Chota Nagpur or the Santal Parganas, they have tended to pare away their differences and to produce a general way of life common to the area.

This common way of life has largely affected the folk-tales and while Verrier Elwin has given in each case the name of the village and the tribe of the narrator, he is careful to explain that 'this does not mean that the story is confined to that particular tribe or indeed known to every member of it. The tales are generally the property of an area rather than of a tribe.' It is as the expression of a general tribal culture that the tales have been presented.

As a collection of new and fascinating material *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal* has an obvious importance, but it is in two other directions that I believe its major value lies. In the first place, it sets a new standard in translation. There are certain negative tests which obviously a translation must survive. There must be 'no extra words, no fresh images, no alien ideas.' The English vocabulary must be geared to the vocabulary of the original and if the original is simple the English must be simple also.

By these standards the earlier translations of C. H. Bompas and J. P. Mills succeed as obviously as those of Campbell and almost all others fail. Yet, good as Bompas's are they do not seem to me as good as Elwin's and the following two extracts will illustrate the difference.

'Once the Cow was disputing with the Wind who was greatest. Then Nanga Baiga came by and asked them why they were fighting. The Cow said, 'I am the greatest, for all over the world the crops grow by the help of my dung.'

Then Sorrow and Sleep came to that place. Sleep said, 'You are both wrong. I am the greatest, for whatever trouble or sorrow you have during the day, I cure it at night.'

The Wind said, 'Yes, I am not great, for without the help of the clouds I cannot move.'

At last Wealth joined them. He said 'I am the greatest, for where I live there is no need of dung, and the Wind cannot harm me, and Sleep comes unbidden, and no Sorrow can remain where I am.'

Sorrow said 'He speaks truly. For where Wealth lives, I cannot live.'

Nanga Baiga heard them all, and he said, 'Truly there is none greater than Wealth.'

[VERRIER ELWIN]

'Once two poor men named Ramai and Somai came to a village and took some waste land from the headman, and ploughed it and sowed millet; and their plough was only drawn by cows and their ploughshare was very small, what is called a 'stumpy share' and when they had sowed a little the rains came on; and Somai gave up cultivation and took to fishing and for a time he made very good profits by catching and selling fish; and he did not trouble even to reap the millet he had sown; he laughed at Ramai who was toiling away clearing more land and sowing maize and rice. He used to go and look at him and tell him that he would never get a crop while he had

nothing better than a 'stumpy' plough; it would probably break to pieces one day and then he would be helpless; he had much better take to fishing which gave quick and easy returns. Ramai made no answer, but when the rains were over there was no more fishing to be done; and Somai was left to starve and had to go from village to village begging. But Ramai reaped his millet and lived on that till his maize was ripe and then his maize supported him until his rice was ripe and he always had plenty to eat; and to show his despite for Somai, after he had had a good dinner, he would come out in front of his house and call out, "What of the stumpy share now?" Every day after eating he would come out and say, "At first I worked hard and suffered hunger but now I am eating in happiness; and you were happy then but now you are starving."

This extract from Bompas is 'clear, straightforward and readable' but it does not flow like Elwin's, neither has it the same easy natural grace. The distinction of Elwin's translations is that through the perfect structure of the sentences, the beauty of the original 'cries aloud.'

The other reason why *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal* is of outstanding importance is that it is the first attempt to apply the work of Maurice Bloomfield and his school to a new collection of folk-tales. In the best previous collection, *The Folklore of the Santal Parganas*, C. H. Bompas presented 185 Santal folk-tales with a careful scientific accuracy but in what might fairly be described as a vacuum. He pointed out that in the stories 'there are many incidents which appear in stories collected in other parts of India.' 'We have instances of the husk myth, the youngest son who surpasses his brother, the life of the ogre placed in some external object, the jealous step-mother, the selection of a king by an elephant, the queen whose husband is invariably killed on his wedding night.' He added, however, that 'few of the old Indian stories found in the *Katha Sarit Sagar* or the *Buddhist Birth Stories* appear in recognizable form in the present collection' and he did not attempt any analysis of motifs. In *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal*, on the other hand, Verrier Elwin has paralleled Bompas's achievement by presenting 150 new tales but he has also gone much further. His twenty-six sections include among others 'The Quest for Love and Treasure,' 'The Magic Articles' Motif,' 'The Skin-dress,' 'The Jealous Queens,' 'The Contest Cycle' and 'The Beast Marriage' and in each case, the tale is related to its Indian parallels. At the same time, every significant reference is fully annotated and the book includes a series of vivid and scholarly notes on subjects as diverse as 'The Life Index,' 'Magic Horses,' 'The Crab in Indian Folklore,' 'Marriage with Supernatural Beings,' 'The Act of Truth,' and 'Milk medicine.'

The result is that not only is each tale revealed as the product of a number of intricate influences but the book is a fascinating encyclopedia of the folklore of Middle India. By its analysis of motifs, its assembling of relevant information and, above all, by its beauty, *Folk-tales of Mahakoshal* is a model for future research.

W. G. ARCHER

G. BATESON AND M. MEAD, *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* (*Special Publications of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1942). Pp. 277 with 759 illustrations.

This wonderful book introduces a new method in Social anthropology. It attempts to state 'the intangible relationships among different types of culturally standardized behaviour by placing side by side mutually relevant photographs.' Each large page of pictures (sometimes 8 to 10 on a page) illustrates a special theme and by this method the authors claim that 'the wholeness of each piece of behaviour can be preserved.' Margaret

Mead, her style a little adulterated by the verbal devices that characterized *Naven*, writes an admirable introductory chapter on the Balinese character, and then Gregory Bateson applies to the behaviour depicted in the photographs the same sort of verbal analysis which he previously devoted to his records of Iatmul transvestitism. The series of pictures, vivid, natural, unposed, beautifully reproduced, give the reader a remarkable insight into the realities of Balinese life. The photos are specially admirable in their portrayal of children and babies; they throw much light on conditions of trance and ecstasy; and they give a remarkable account (which could hardly have been communicated in any other way) of 'mouth-culture,' the use of pre-chopped food, body products, suckling, the games of children. To make the book, 25,000 photographs were taken.

This brief note does not attempt to do justice to one of the most original, illuminating and beautiful monographs of modern ethnographic science: it is beyond the purse of the ordinary reader, but every library should have it.

V. E.

R. KENNEDY, *Islands and Peoples of the Indies*. Pp. 66 and 21 Plates.  
H. W. KRIEGER, *Island Peoples of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 104 and 21 Plates.  
H. W. KRIEGER, *Peoples of the Philippines*. Pp. 86 and 24 Plates.

(Smithsonian Institution, Washington. War Background Studies, 1942-43.)

These useful booklets have been issued by the Smithsonian Institution in a series (which includes also studies of Soviet Russia and India) intended to illustrate the geographical and cultural background of the war. Each booklet is illuminated by excellent photographs and is pleasantly produced. In so short a compass, only the briefest summary of the life and institutions of the countries and races studied has been possible, but the booklets will be useful as reference 'guide-books' to anthropologists. Kennedy gives an interesting note on missionary activity in the Netherlands East Indies. 'Every missionary group in the Indies operated under a license in which the area of activity was strictly delimited and the procedure minutely prescribed. These licenses were subject to immediate cancellation if the missionaries overstepped the bounds of their stated privileges, or if the Government found that the natives were opposed to their presence. Some districts were virtually closed to missionaries, notably the strongly Mohammedan areas of Aceh in Sumatra and Bautam in western Java, and the Hindu island of Bali. Even where missionaries had been active for centuries however, their efforts to convert the natives were largely unsuccessful. Undoubtedly the neutral attitude of the Government was partly responsible for this.'

These books are worth possessing for the illustrations alone.

V. E.







Central Archaeological Library,

NEW DELHI. 33429.

Call No. 572.05/ME

Author—

Title—Manju Inda  
vol 24.

Borrower No.	Date of Issue	Date of Return
Indira Gandhi	7/6/78	16/6/78

"A book that is shut is but a block"

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIBRARY  
GOVT. OF INDIA  
Department of Archaeology  
NEW DELHI.

Please help us to keep the book  
clean and moving.